Quiz: Myth and Facts about Your Heart

Below are the correct answers to the quiz in the February Wellness Connection Newsletter. How did you do?

1.) During a heart attack, your heart stops beating.

CORRECT ANSWER: False
During a heart attack, the heart is still beating but blood supply to heart tissue is blocked, leading to tissue death. When your heart suddenly stops functioning, it's called "cardiac arrest."

2.) Heart disease kills more men than women.

CORRECT ANSWER: False
Men tend to develop heart disease earlier in life than women, but after menopause, women catch up. According to CDC statistics, in 2006 (the most recent year recorded), about the same number of American women died from heart disease (315,930) as men (315,706).

3.) Heart disease is the No. 2 killer of women in the United States, second only to breast cancer.

CORRECT ANSWER: False
Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the United States, killing more women than all forms of cancer combined. One in four women die of heart disease, while one in 30 die of breast cancer.

4.) If you think you're having a heart attack, you should:

CORRECT ANSWER: Call 911 immediately
If you think you're having a heart attack, you should dial 911 immediately, rather than waiting to see if you feel better. Emergency medical services personnel are equipped to treat or resuscitate you if your heart stops en route and studies have shown that heart attack patients generally receive faster treatment when they're transported by ambulance and the hospital is anticipating their arrival.

5.) Which of the following could be a sign of a heart attack?

CORRECT ANSWER: All of the above
Although the most common sign of a heart attack is chest pain or discomfort, it's not always one of the symptoms. Other symptoms might include shortness of breath, nausea, sweating, feeling lightheaded, and/or pain or discomfort in other parts of the upper body, such as the back, stomach, neck, or jaw

6.) "Broken heart syndrome" is a real medical condition, and its symptoms are similar to those of a heart attack.

CORRECT ANSWER: True
"Broken heart syndrome" is a term used to describe a type of heart problem that's often brought on by grief or emotional stress. Traumatic events can trigger the sympathetic nervous system, the "fight or flight" mechanism, and the sudden flood of chemicals, including adrenaline, can stun the heart muscle, leaving it temporarily unable to pump properly. Although symptoms may be similar, it is not the same as a heart attack. The good news is that the heart muscle usually recovers from this fairly quickly.

7.) The most common risk factor for heart disease in the U.S. is:

CORRECT ANSWER: Inactivity
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 39.5% of Americans are at risk for heart disease because of inactivity. The percentages of U.S. adults with other key risk factors are: obesity, 33.9%; high blood pressure, 30.5%; cigarette smoking, 20.8%; high cholesterol, 15.6%; and diabetes, 10.1%.

8.) Approximately what percentage of the U.S. population suffers from some form of cardiovascular disease?

CORRECT ANSWER: 37%
About 81.1 million Americans, or 36.9% of the population, suffered from some form of cardiovascular disease as of 2006, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

9.) A Mediterranean-style diet has been associated with a reduced risk of heart disease.

CORRECT ANSWER: True
In 2009, a study of American women found that women whose diets most closely matched a Mediterranean diet had a 29% reduction in heart disease risk compared with women whose diets least resembled it. Other studies also show a beneficial effect on risk factors for heart disease, such as blood pressure and cholesterol.

A Mediterranean diet features olive oil as an important fat source, wine in low to moderate amounts, and large amounts of fruits, vegetables, bread, potatoes, beans, nuts, and seeds. It calls for little red meat and low to moderate amounts of dairy products, fish, and poultry.

10.) The FDA has approved which of the following aspirin regimens to help prevent heart attacks?

CORRECT ANSWER: None of the above
The FDA has not approved aspirin for prevention of heart attacks for people who have never had one. However, aspirin has been shown to lower the risk of heart attack when used daily, and the American Heart Association recommends it for patients who have already had a heart attack. Always consult your doctor before beginning aspirin therapy.

11.) You can lower your risk of heart disease by:

CORRECT ANSWER: Reducing your sodium intake
High-sodium diets have been tied to increased blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke, according to the American Heart Association. The AHA recommends no more than 1,500 mg sodium per day. Vitamin E and folate have both been shown to be important for heart health, but studies have cast doubt on the usefulness of vitamin E supplements, and the National Institutes of Health says its "premature" to recommend folic acid supplements for heart disease. It's best to get both nutrients from dietary sources.