Cultural Daily

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Fight the #1 Killer of Americans with Art, Meditation, and Healthy Diet

Dan Matthews · Wednesday, March 4th, 2020

According to the American College of Cardiology, cardiovascular disease (CVD) has been and continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States. How should Americans react to this sobering fact? The answer certainly isn't sitting still or looking the other way. Instead, it's worth breaking down some of the most common heart disease symptoms in order to better understand what this quiet killer is and what U.S. citizens can do to help stop it dead in its tracks instead of letting it stop them dead in theirs.

The #1 Killer

The side effects of CVD come in many different forms, including heart attacks, heart disease, strokes, and hypertension, or high blood pressure (HBP). While the symptoms of HBP aren't always readily apparent, they can include things as innocent as:

- Exhaustion
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Nosebleeds

If you think you're one of the literally tens of millions of Americans who struggle with CVD and its symptoms, the first thing you should do is consult with a medical professional as soon as possible.

How to Defend Yourself

For the nearly one in two Americans dealing with cardiovascular disease, there are many different ways to address the symptoms along with working with a healthcare professional. Often these boil down to simple, holistic techniques that aim to calm your nerves and boost your overall health.

Use Art

The mysterious power of art has long been linked to a reduction in stress, and less stress naturally translates to lower blood pressure.

In fact, this phenomenon has been showing up in an increasing number of studies that are concluding that art-focused endeavors lower blood pressure, which, in turn, reduces stress and

increases happiness. The takeaway? If you're fighting with high blood pressure, you can take to the arts for solace.

Meditate

Meditation has a slew of different benefits that include:

- Helping you focus
- Aiding in getting quality sleep
- Giving you more energy during the day
- Improving your overall mood

Meditation also can provide two critical services when it comes to cardiovascular disease, in particular: it can help reduce stress and lower your blood pressure. The relaxed mental state and improved sleep that meditation provides can have direct benefits on your physical condition, thus reducing your BP.

Eat Well

Meditation and art both focus on mental aspects that can impact your physical health. However, you can't simply lean on observing art as you sit in the Lotus position eating garbage all day long. At a certain point, you need to take care of your body as well. There are many poor habits that can aggravate your health, and your diet has a direct impact on the state of your heart.

For instance, binge drinking — along with being horrible for your health in plenty of other ways — has been specifically tagged as a cause for high blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat, and even heart failure.

Apart from avoiding obvious things like excessive alcohol and fast foods, though, it's also important that you select a good, sustainable diet and then do your best to stick to it over time. Eating consistently healthy food is one of the most effective ways to preserve your health.

As you consider your situation and choose a diet that works for you, make sure to avoid any crash diets. Instead, look for sustainable options that focus on healthy heart-related food choices like:

- Reducing caffeine intake
- Limiting alcohol
- Cutting back on sodium
- Increasing your potassium

All of these measures should be taken with careful consideration and input from your doctor.

Weed Out the Little Habits

Finally, there are many small habits that can slowly add to the stress of your heart. Look for the little things in your life that you can weed out in order to increase your heart's overall health. For instance, if you're a smoker, it may be time to finally quit for good. Studies have found that smoking is one of the lead causes of developing a variety of diseases — including cardiovascular disease.

In addition, the act of smoking can actually increase your blood pressure for several minutes,

which is clearly not a great idea if you're already struggling with heart concerns. The point is, look for the little habits like smoking that you can eliminate in the name of your heart health.

Take It to the Professionals

You likely saw this one coming from a mile away, but that doesn't make it any less important. You can't tackle an issue as severe and dangerous as CVD without making this caveat at least once or twice: **if you're dealing with (or even just *think* you're dealing with) heart issues, you absolutely *must* consult with a healthcare provider as immediately as possible**.

Go to your doctor, have them confirm your suspicions, and then discuss your options with them. The above suggestions may be all you need in order to dramatically reduce your risks. However, you may need to supplement the holistic, wellness-focused treatment with a stronger medicinal solution as well.

Either way, though, taking steps to calm your mind and boost your physical health are good places to start. They can help restore peace to your mind and body, and enable your heart to go on pumping life-giving blood through your veins for years to come.

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