



PHOTO: KATRINA LEWIS, REGISTERED KINESIOLOGIST DEMONSTRATING AN EXERCISE STRESS TEST TO DETERMINE HOW THE HEART RESPONDS TO WORK. DIRECT SKIN CONTACT IS REQUIRED FOR THE ACTUAL TEST

# Are You At Risk? WOMEN & HEART DISEASE

by Katrina Lewis, Registered Kinesiologist

**D**id you know that cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of women in Canada today? More than 39,000 women die annually making heart disease and stroke more prevalent than cancer, diabetes or accidents. Forty percent of all coronary events in women are fatal and two thirds of all sudden deaths in women occur without a history of the disease. In the women that do survive, stroke is one of the leading causes of disability.

## Risk Factors

### The Type Women Can't Control or Change

- Ethnicity (South Asian, Black, First Nations/ Aboriginal Peoples or Inuit)
- Family history of heart disease or stroke
- Menopause

### The Type Women Can Control or Change

- Smoking
- Physical Inactivity
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High Blood Pressure
- High Blood Cholesterol
- Stress

## Prevention

### Quit Smoking:

The mixture of nicotine and carbon monoxide in each cigarette temporarily increases your heart rate and blood pressure straining your heart and blood vessels. Carbon monoxide robs your muscles, brain and body tissue of oxygen making your whole body and especially your heart work harder. Over time the airways swell up and let less air into the lungs. Smoking also causes fat deposits to narrow and block blood vessels and this is what leads to heart attack.

### Be More Active:

Regular physical activity may prevent the development of high blood pressure and reduces blood pressure in people with hypertension. High levels of activity encourage weight loss and may also favorably affect body fat distribution. It also appears to relieve the symptoms of depression, anxiety and improves mood.

### Eat Healthy:

Our bodies are constantly being bombarded with "free radicals" such as: UV light, burned food, toxic chemicals and automobile pollution. Each cell in our body

is hit every ten seconds and receives 10,000 hits/day. "Free radicals" create cellular damage such as aging and various health problems while "antioxidants" neutralize these damaging effects. We can counteract this problem by making sure we get "antioxidant" rich plant and plant-based foods in our diet. A diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruit, fish, poultry and legumes is the best choice for healthy lifestyle.

### Take Time To Relax:

Stress releases fatty acids and glucose into the bloodstream. These can be converted into natural fat and cholesterol and deposited on arterial walls (arteriosclerosis). These deposits then create resistance to blood flow and contribute to high blood pressure. Stress also increases the likelihood of smoking and using caffeinated foods and beverages that may cause damage. It is very important to take out sometime everyday to relax. Activities such as walking, reading, taking a warm bath or meditating are great examples.

For more information or a FREE tour of our clinic contact **KATCH LIFE** Health & Wellness Suite 202-8041 Granville St. Vancouver, BC V6P 4Z5 604.825.7555 or 604.263.6464. Get Fit + Be Happy = **KATCH LIFE**.



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Health Coach

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