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for your employees  
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**February 14, 2011**

# WELLNESS WEEKLY

## Heart Health

*Are you at risk for a heart attack?*

A heart attack can happen to anyone – it is only when we take the time to learn which of the risk factors apply to us, specifically, can we then take the steps to eliminate or reduce them.

### What are the risk factors for a heart attack?

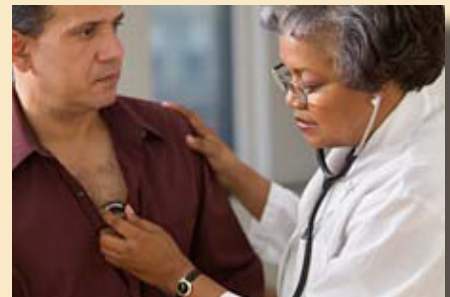
There are two types of risk factors for a heart attack: genetic/inherited and acquired. Inherited or genetic risk factors are those you are born with and cannot be changed, but can be improved with medical management and lifestyle changes. Acquired risk factors are caused by activities that we choose to include in our lives that can be managed through lifestyle changes and clinical care.

### Who is most at risk due to inherited factors?

- ♥ Those with inherited high blood pressure
- ♥ Those with a family history of heart disease (*especially with onset before age 55*)

### Who is most at risk due to acquired risk factors?

- ♥ Cigarette smokers
- ♥ Those who are under a lot of stress
- ♥ Those who drink more than two alcoholic beverages each day
- ♥ Those who lead a sedentary lifestyle
- ♥ Those who are overweight by 30% or more
- ♥ Those who eat a diet high in saturated fat



### What is a heart attack or myocardial infarction (MI)?

A heart attack occurs when one or more regions of the heart muscle have a severe or prolonged decrease in oxygen supply caused by blocked blood flow to the heart muscle.

The blockage is often a result of a build up of plaque, made up of cholesterol, other fatty substances, and a blood clot. Plaque ruptures and eventually a blood clot forms. The cause of a heart attack is a blood clot that forms within the plaque-obstructed area.

If the blood and oxygen supply is cut off severely or for a long period of time, muscle cells of the heart suffer severe damage and die. The result is damage or death to the area of the heart that because affected by reduced blood supply.

### How to live a more heart healthy lifestyle

- ♥ Know the limits on fats, sugars, and salt (sodium). Make the most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods containing these.
- ♥ Make Exercise an important part of your life:  
Even low-to-moderate intensity activities for as little as 30 minutes a day can be beneficial. More vigorous aerobic activities, done three or four times a week for 30 to 60 minutes are best for improving the fitness of the heart and lungs.