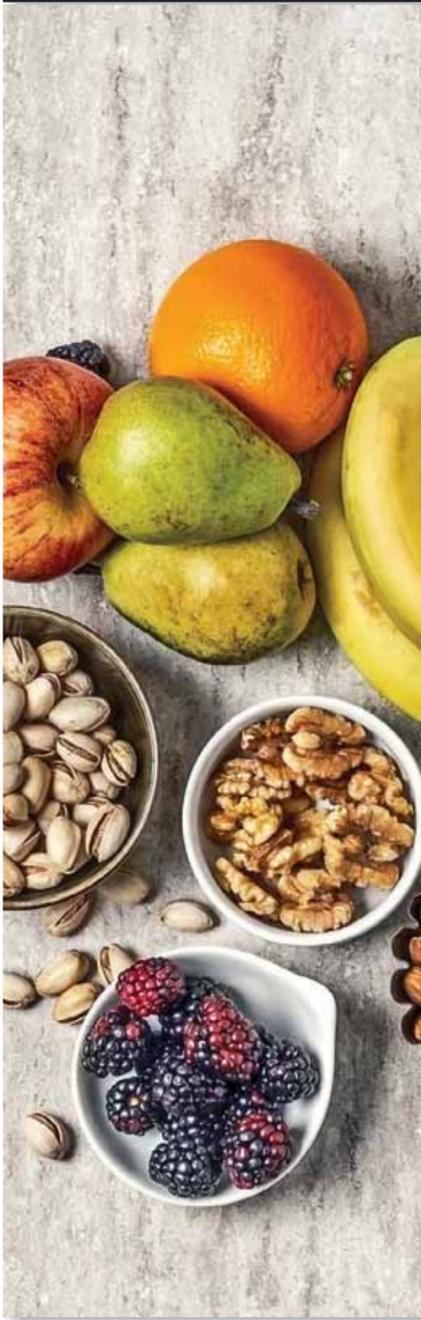


farragutpress presents

HeartHealth

FARRAGUTPRESS THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021 • 1C



Fruits and vegetables may lower risk of PAD

Pain in the lower extremities may be indicative of a condition called peripheral artery disease, or PAD.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute says PAD occurs when plaque builds up in the arteries that carry blood to the limbs, head and organs, contributing to atherosclerosis, or a hardening of the arteries. Blocked blood flow and eventual limited oxygen supply to these areas can cause pain and numbness. When severe enough, PAD may lead to tissue death.

Discomfort due to PAD usually occurs when a person is walking or exercising, because the muscles are not getting enough blood during these activities to meet their needs, says the American Heart Association. Those with diabetes may confuse pain with neuropathy, and the elderly may think pain from PAD is a normal sign of aging and stiffness.

When undiagnosed, PAD can lead to further complications, including increased risk for heart attack, stroke, and coronary artery disease. Even amputation of a limb may be necessary. However, PAD is preventable when taking a few

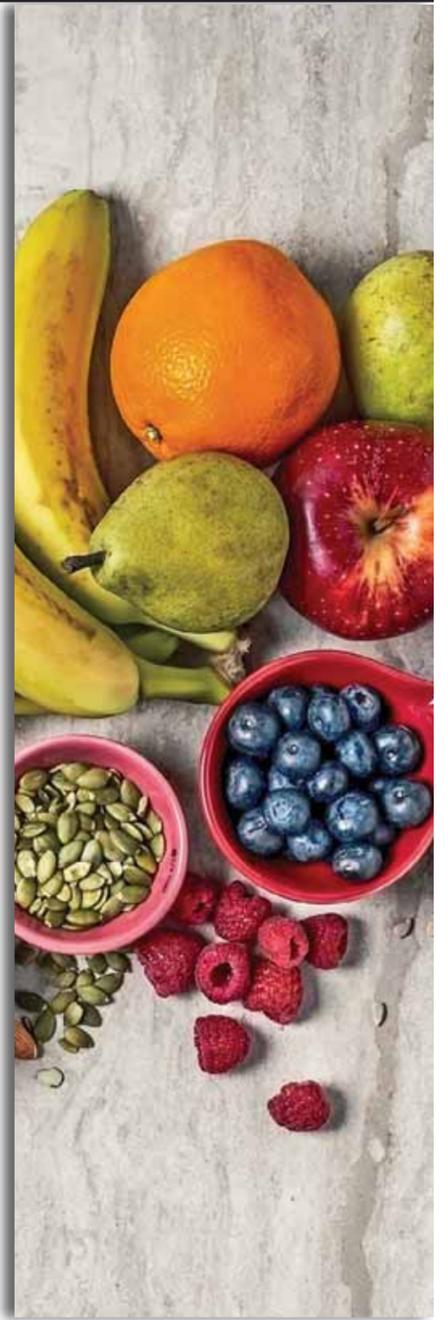
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The best (and worst) foods for heart health

No one wants to hear from their doctors that they have joined the millions of people across the globe to be diagnosed with heart disease. The Heart Foundation reports that heart disease, which includes diseases of the heart and cardiovascular system and stroke, is the No. 1 cause of death in the United States, affecting both men and women and most racial/ethnic groups. Heart disease also is one of the leading causes of death in Canada, claiming more than 33,000 lives per year.

Many factors contribute to the development of heart disease, including smoking, lack of exercise and stress. Diet and whether a

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Getting to the **HEART** of pet parasite prevention



Pets rely on their owners to look out for their physical well-being. Many serious health issues can afflict pets, and parasites are a common cause of illness and discomfort.

Of all the parasitic worms dogs, cats and other companion animals may acquire, heartworms may be the most concerning. Heartworm disease can result in lung and heart failure, other organ damage, and potentially death. Heartworm disease is caused by a blood-borne parasite known as *Dirofilaria immitis*, offers the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. It is spread through the bite of a mosquito. Dogs are often the host of choice. The parasites infect the dog, mature into adults, mate and produce offspring all while living inside the animal. Cats are atypical hosts for heartworms, and most worms in cats do not survive the adult stage.

While heartworm infection has been report-

ed in all 50 states, it is most common along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Heartworms also can occur in the warmer regions of Canada where summer temperatures are high enough for the worm larvae to survive inside carrier mosquitoes. Once inside a new host, it takes approximately six months for the larvae to develop into sexually mature adult heartworms, advises The American Heartworm Society. Once mature, heartworms can survive five to seven years in dogs and up to two to three years in cats. Each mosquito season can increase the number of worms in infected pets.

Prevention is key to ensuring the health of a pet. Adult heartworms can infect the heart, pulmonary artery and adjacent large blood vessels. A blood test can reveal whether a pet is affected by heartworms, as early infection may not yield noticeable symptoms.

Apart from keeping pets away from mosquito-heavy areas, pet owners will find that

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How the body heals after quitting smoking

Few habits are as harmful to the human body as smoking tobacco products, especially cigarettes.

The American Heart Association says smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States. Smoking is linked to heart disease and stroke and can increase the risk for cancers of the bladder, throat, cervix, pancreas, and mouth. Smoking is linked to roughly 90 percent of lung cancer cases in the United States as well. Lung Cancer Canada indicates the majority of lung cancer cases in Canada — about 85 percent — are directly related to smoking tobacco.

Even though smoking can ravage the body and cause significant damage to the lungs, which worsens the longer one smokes, people who quit may be able to restore a good portion of their lung health. The Lung Health Institute says there are a number of ways the lungs can heal once a person stops smoking. While it may not be possible to undo the structural damage to the lungs, lung function can be significantly restored when people quit smoking. Here's a look at some ways the lungs and other parts of the body may recover.

- **Risk of heart attack decreases:** The wellness resource Verywell says that after day one of quitting smokers' risk of heart attack begins to decrease.
- **Rate of COPD decline improves:** Research published in the journal Respiratory Medicine found that people with mild to moderate COPD can expect to experience normalization of lung function decline within a year of quitting. This means that the rate of decline considered normal with age is the same as someone who had never smoked before.
- **Reduced lung cancer risk:** The risk of getting lung cancer reduces by 50 percent after 10 years of being smoke-free, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.
- **Carbon monoxide levels go down:** Orlando Health says carbon monoxide gradually leaves the bloodstream after people quit smoking, which helps reduce the severity of symptoms like shortness of breath. Similarly, chemicals in cigarette smoke can inflame the lining of the airways.
- **Reactivation of cilia:** Cilia are the small hair-like structures that move mucus and bacteria to the back of the throat. They fail to work properly when a person smokes, but can resume function after quitting.
- **Improved circulation:** When lung function improves, oxygen can more effectively reach cells through the body and circulation improves. Within 24 hours of quitting, constriction of blood vessels also will occur, resulting in lower blood pressure and improved pulse rate. Body temperature will start to normalize within 24 hours as well.
- **Improved taste and smell:** Within 48 hours of quitting, taste and smell receptors start to heal, and damaged nerve cells also will begin to self-repair.



DID YOU KNOW?

Every 40 seconds someone in the U.S. has a heart attack, and approximately 805,000 heart attacks occur in the U.S. each year!

Most Medicare plans will *NOT* cover all the drug and treatment costs resulting from a Heart Attack or a Stroke.

If you suffer a heart attack or stroke, the last thing you want to worry about is your finances.

Heart Attack/Stroke Insurance provides the financial resources you need so you can focus on your recovery, not your medical bills.

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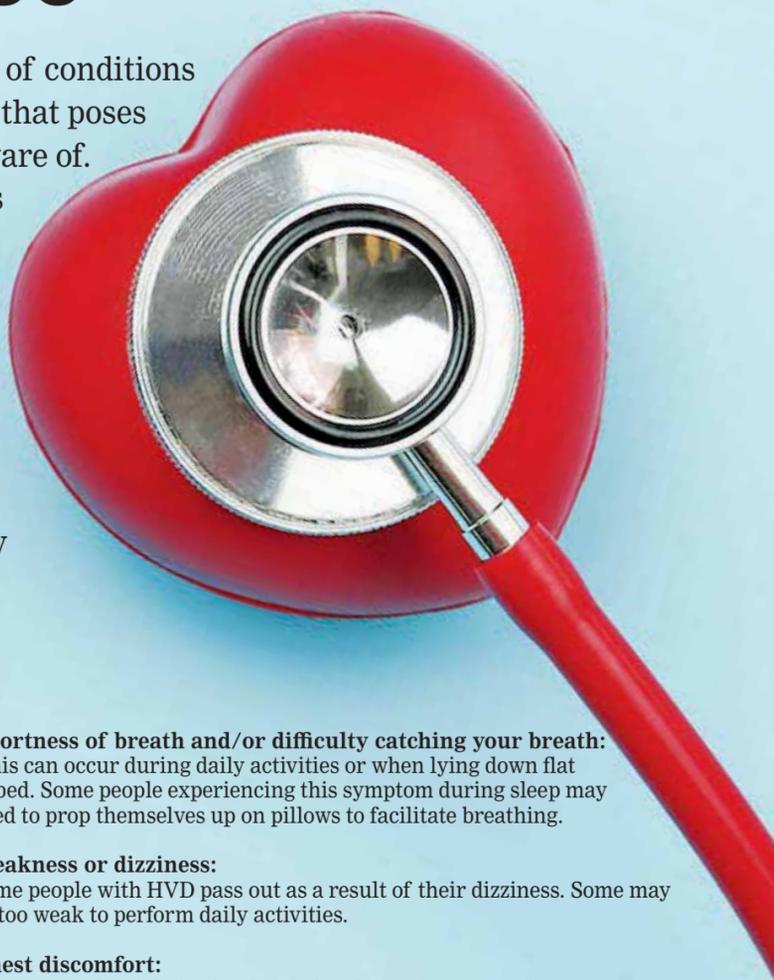
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Symptoms of heart valve disease

Heart disease is a blanket term that includes a variety of conditions and illnesses. Heart valve disease is one such condition that poses a significant threat, a threat that many people are unaware of.

A 2016 public opinion survey of more than 2,000 adults sponsored by the nonprofit Alliance for Aging Research found that public awareness of heart valve disease, or HVD, is very low. Fewer than one in four survey respondents knew much about HVD at all. That's despite the fact that the AAR reports that as many as 11 million people in the United States have HVD.

Raising awareness of HVD, including its symptoms, can help people protect themselves from this potentially deadly disease.



What is HVD?

HVD occurs when the heart's valves, which maintain one-way blood flow through the heart, are not functioning properly. The heart has four valves that, when working properly, ensure the free flow of blood in a forward direction, preventing backward leakage. This process is essential to the successful and continuous flow of blood to the heart, lungs and body.

What causes HVD?

HVD sometimes develops before birth, meaning some instances are congenital birth defects. In some such instances, people may be born with valves that are the wrong size. Some valve diseases are acquired during one's lifetime. Acquired valve diseases may be linked to conditions such as rheumatic fever or endocarditis, which occurs when germs enter the bloodstream and attack the heart valves.

What are the symptoms of HVD?

The online medical resource Medicine.net notes that even people with no symptoms at all may have severe valve disease that requires prompt treatment. As a result, it's imperative that people prioritize annual health check-ups. Annual physicals can be a person's best defense against various conditions, including HVD.

People who experience any of the following symptoms, which should be reported to a physician immediately, may be suffering from HVD.

• **Shortness of breath and/or difficulty catching your breath:** This can occur during daily activities or when lying down flat in bed. Some people experiencing this symptom during sleep may need to prop themselves up on pillows to facilitate breathing.

• **Weakness or dizziness:** Some people with HVD pass out as a result of their dizziness. Some may be too weak to perform daily activities.

• **Chest discomfort:** A pressure of weight in the chest when being active or going out in cold air may be indicative of HVD.

• **Palpitations:** This symptom can feel like a rapid heart rhythm, irregular heartbeat, skipped beats, or a flip-flop feeling in the chest.

• **Edema:** This swelling of the ankles, feet or abdomen can, when affecting the belly, make people feel bloated.

• **Rapid weight gain:** Some people with HVD gain two to three pounds in a single day.



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“Many fried foods have little nutritional value, as they tend to be high in saturated and trans fats. French fries are particularly bad because they are carbohydrates fried and then doused in salt ...”

Foods
From page 1C

person is overweight or obese also can have a direct link to heart health. Diet, particularly for those with diabetes and poorly controlled blood sugar levels, is a major concern.

A variety of foods are considered helpful for maintaining a strong and healthy heart and cardiovascular system, while others can contribute to conditions that may eventually lead to cardiovascular disease or cardiac arrest. Moderation enables a person to sample a little of everything, but not to make any one food a habit. The following are some foods to promote heart health and some foods you might want to avoid.

GOOD

- **Tree nuts:** Tree nuts contain unsaturated fats that can help lower LDL cholesterol (the bad stuff) and improve HDL (the good stuff). Nuts also are a filling source of protein

and other healthy nutrients.

- **Whole grains:** Whole grains contain complex carbohydrates for energy, as well as protein and fiber. Fiber can help scrub cholesterol from the blood, lowering bad cholesterol levels.
- **Fatty fish:** Many cold-water, fatty fish, such as halibut, herring and salmon, contain omega-3 fatty acids, which are heart-healthy. Omega-3s also can be found in walnuts, flaxseed and some soy products.
- **Beans:** Beans and other legumes are an excellent source of protein and can be a stand-in for meats that are high in saturated fat. Beans also contain cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber and folate, which can reduce blood homocystein levels. The Bean Institute reports that consuming beans may reduce cholesterol levels by roughly six to 10 percent.
- **Yogurt:** Researchers in Japan found yogurt may protect against gum disease. Left untreated, gum disease may elevate a person's risk

for heart disease. Yogurt contains good bacteria that can counteract bad bacteria and boost immunity.

- **Raisins:** Raisins contain antioxidants that may help reduce inflammation. Inflammation is often linked to heart disease and other debilitating conditions. Fresh produce also is a good source of antioxidants.

POOR

- **Fried foods:** Many fried foods have little nutritional value, as they tend to be high in saturated and trans fats. French fries are particularly bad because they are carbohydrates fried and then doused in salt.
- **Sausage:** Processed meats have frequently earned a bad reputation among cardiologists, but sausage can be a big offender, due in large part to its high saturated fat content.
- **Red meats:** Enjoying a steak is probably not as bad as eating a deep-fried brownie, but it's best to limit red meat consumption to

about 10 percent or less of your diet. Red meats can have a considerable amount of cholesterol, saturated fat and calories.

- **Added sugars:** Sugar can increase blood pressure and triglyceride levels. Sugar often hides out in foods that you would not associate with the sweetener. Plus, many people unwittingly consume too much sugar simply through sugar-sweetened beverages and ready-to-eat cereals.
- **Salty foods:** Leave the salt shaker in the spice cabinet and opt for herbs for flavoring, advises the American Heart Association. High-sodium diets often are to blame for hypertension, a major risk factor for heart disease.
- **Dairy:** Artery-clogging saturated fat also can be found in dairy products, particularly the full-fat versions. Butter, sour cream and milk can be problematic when people overindulge. Opt for low-fat dairy when possible.

Pet Parasite
From page 1C

annual heartworm testing as well as monthly prevention medications can provide the protection needed to keep animals safe. Heartworm preventives must be purchased from a veterinarian or with a prescription through a pet pharmacy in the United States. Check requirements for those

living in Canada. The FDA warns that the treatment for heartworm disease is not easy on the dog and it is costly. Treatment can be potentially toxic to the dog's body and can cause serious complications, such as the development of life-threatening blood clots in the dog's lungs. Preventive medicines can reduce pets' risk of developing heartworm.

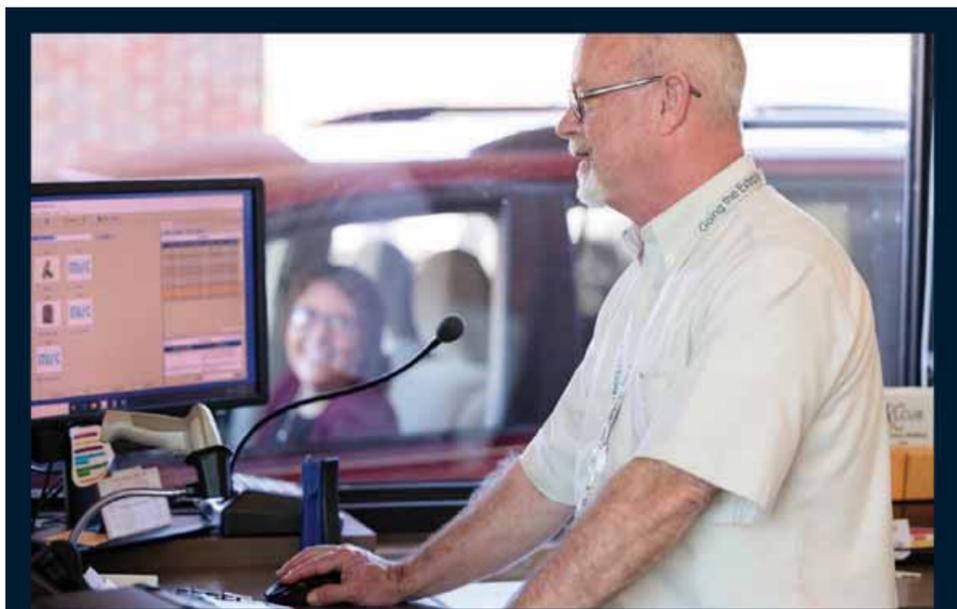
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PAD
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steps to improve diet. According to new research published by the American Heart Association, eating more fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of developing PAD, which affects an estimated 8.5 million people in the United States alone. Researchers examined dietary data from roughly 3.7 million men and women, with an average age of 65. Approximately 6.3 percent of the subjects had PAD, and 29.2 percent indicated they ate three or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. The discovery was those who reported eating three or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables had an 18 percent lower risk of PAD than those who reported eating less of these foods. The association

between fruit and vegetable consumption and lower PAD risk remained even after accounting for age, gender, race, smoking status, and various cardiovascular risk factors. Saturated fats, trans-fats and sodium can contribute to the formation of plaques that lead to PAD. Replacing these foods with more vegetables and fruits that are naturally lower in saturated fats can help, as can increasing dietary fiber consumption. One way to incorporate these types of foods is to adhere to a Mediterranean diet, which offers high proportions of legumes, fruits, vegetables; moderate amounts of fish and dairy; and limited meat and meat products. Peripheral artery disease can be a warning sign of cardiovascular trouble. Altering one's diet may help naturally prevent or treat this condition.



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Cholesterol its relation to heart disease

High cholesterol levels have long been directly linked to heart disease. But as more research into cholesterol and its relation to heart disease is conducted, some doctors are shifting their views on the relationship between the two.

Statistics from the American Heart Association indicate that 75 million Americans currently suffer from heart disease. And even though one-quarter of the population takes cholesterol-lowering medication and have reduced the fat content of their diets, the AHA estimates that more Americans will die of heart disease than ever before.

More revelations are coming to the forefront regarding cholesterol and heart disease. New research has shown that statin drugs are ineffective at reducing mortality rates in most populations. Furthermore, according to the Framingham Heart Study, which is the longest-running and most comprehensive study on heart disease to date, it was demonstrated that cholesterol intake in the diet had no correlation with heart disease. The study found that men and women with above average cholesterol levels had nearly identical rates of heart disease compared to those with below average cholesterol rates.

Another potential eye opener is that, in addition to cholesterol not affecting heart disease risk, eating high-cholesterol foods does not elevate blood-cholesterol levels as doctors once thought. Ancel Keys, who is considered the "father" of the theory that cholesterol contributes to heart disease, now says that there's no connection between cholesterol in food and cholesterol in the blood.

If not cholesterol levels and the foods one eats, what, then is responsible for heart disease? Many medical professionals and researchers now believe the primary causes of heart disease are inflammation and oxidative stress.

According to Dr. Dwight Lundell, a heart surgeon and author of the book, "The Great Cholesterol Lie," foods like refined sugars and vegetable oils used to preserve processed foods may lead to the inflammation that ultimately causes heart disease. Inflammation is the body's immune response to a foreign invader. Foods high in sugar and saturated fat can exacerbate inflammation. Bacteria and other unwanted substances in the body also contribute to inflammation.

To combat inflammation, people can adopt a healthy eating style. Fatty fish, whole grains, leafy greens, fiber, and nuts can help reduce inflammation.

Exercise also can reduce inflammation. Research from Mark Hamer, PhD, an epidemiologist at University College London, found that, regardless of BMI or weight, study participants who completed 2.5 hours of moderate exercise each week — about 20 minutes a day — lowered their markers of inflammation by at least 12 percent.

When a person exercises, muscle tissue releases a protein molecule called cytokine, which likely prompts an inflammation drop. Just about any type of workout that raises heart rate is effective in helping with inflammation.

The public may have been misinformed about just how vital it is to reduce cholesterol levels. Contrary to popular belief, high cholesterol may not have the same connection to heart disease as doctors once thought. In fact, inflammation may be the bigger component in heart disease risk.

Did you know?

Heart disease can affect just about anyone. While it was once widely and mistakenly considered a man's disease, since 1984, more women than men have died each year from heart disease. According to the Harvard Medical School, heart disease is the leading cause of death in women over age 65, just as it's the leading killer of men. Myths abound with regard to heart disease and heart attack risk. One such myth that prevails is that a person who has heart disease should avoid all exercise. However, cardiologists advise that physical activity can help to strengthen the heart, which will improve blood flow to the brain and internal organs. Those who want to exercise should speak with their doctors about which types of exercise are right for them. In the interim, begin with some low-intensity walking, as this is usually a safe, low-impact way to improve personal health.



THE SKIN WELLNESS CENTER



The staff at The Skin Wellness Center want to remind you to learn about heart health and your risk for heart disease.

Small changes such as diet and exercise can go a long way in the prevention of heart disease. Schedule a physical with your primary care provider today to find out if you are at risk and how to keep your heart healthy.



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