

Heart Care Specialists from Fortis Hospitals share secrets behind Healthy Hearts



Dr. Hasmukh Ravat
Interventional Cardiologist
Fortis Hospitals, Mulund

Prevention of heart diseases

There appears epidemic of heart diseases in India. In the last decade, there is rise in both absolute and proportional rise in mortality due to heart diseases in our country. Our population is showing a change in dietary patterns. There is high prevalence of multiple lifestyle and metabolic heart disease, risk factors-physical inactivity, high fat intake, low fruits and vegetable intake, smoking, obesity, hypertension and lipid abnormalities.

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to reduce your chances of getting heart disease. You should know your blood pressure and keep it under control, exercise regularly, don't smoke, get tested for diabetes and if you have it - keep it under control, know your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and keep them under control, eat lot of fruits and vegetables and maintain a healthy weight. Finally increase in the awareness for heart diseases is very important.

Cardiac ailments and its treatments

Cardiac ailments existing from birth are called congenital heart diseases such as Atrial & Ventricular septal defects. Ventricular septal defects may close with development, but may need surgery later. In adults, the coronary artery disease is very common, caused due to poor lifestyles and hereditary factors. In milder forms medicines alone may control it but in advanced cases it requires Angioplasty or Bypass surgery.

In India, Rheumatic heart disease may affect the valves. Initially it can be managed by medicines but requires surgical correction as it advances. Any disturbance in the electrical activity of heart also requires treatment such as a slow pulse requires a pacemaker while the fast ones requires drug treatment or Radiofrequency ablation or Automatic internal cardiac defibrillators. Sometimes the covering of the heart called the pericardium itself may be diseased which requires drug treatment or surgical removal.



Dr. Sandeep Rane
Interventional Cardiologist
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Dr. Prakash Sanzgiri
Interventional Cardiologist
S. L. Raheja (a Fortis associate) Hospital,
Mahim

Updates in cardiology

In India, Coronary artery disease is affecting both, young and old resulting in heart muscle damage with physical disability and financial loss. Recent advances in technology, devices and medical expertise have given such patients options of percutaneous treatment of severe arterial blocks. Coronary Angioplasty can be performed in wrist or groin with no cuts or sutures and very little pain. The blocked artery is cleared using thin wires, sleek balloons, diamond tipped thin drills [rotablaters] and scaffolded the diseased segment with stents [slotted tubes mounted on balloons]. Advancement in coating these stents with special medicines prevents re-blockage of these stents, giving life-time benefit in over 92-94% of such patients. Initially, coronary stenting was performed for discrete, single blocks, today cardiologists have become expert in treating multiple blocks, even if all 3 coronary arteries or left main coronary artery are involved. With technological assistance, cardiologists strive to clear blockages in arteries with least pain or complications, in a short time and ensures that the patient resumes active and fruitful life at the earliest, and in most cost-effective manner.



Dr. Nilesh Maru
Cardiothoracic &
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Fortis Hospitals, Mulund

Life after cardiac surgery

Cardiac surgery has come a long way from having high rate of mortality and morbidity to a routinely performed surgery with favorable outcome. Today patient undergoing bypass surgery (off pump or on pump) and valve surgery usually go home on 4th or 5th post-operative day and can resume their work by 3rd week. Cardiac surgery has become so safe these days that the complication rate is less than 1%. Minimal invasive surgery has faster recovery and can be offered to selected patients. This has been possible due to continuous development in surgical techniques.

In order to maintain favorable long term outcome the patient should take and follow prescribed diet and medicines.

Join **Fortis Cardiac Support Group** for all walks of life

For more information, call **Mulund: 9167001122**
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WEAK BONES

As you age, your bones degenerate causing spondylosis, fractures, and osteoarthritis. **Expert speak:** Dr Ashish Agarwal, knee and hip replacement surgeon, Bombay Hospital, says, "To avoid bone degeneration practice shoulder scapular mobilisation exercises, resisted neck exercises, postural correction and avoid long hours of sitting in one position. Regular exercise and consuming sufficient vitamin D through a healthy diet and maintaining a

healthy weight can help prevent most bone problems."

HEART AILMENTS

As you age, you are more at a risk of hypertension, heart attacks and heart failure. Also your heart's pacemaker may slow down due to calcium deposition. **Expert speak:** To prevent heart diseases, it is important to live a healthy life early on, especially post 40 years, and undergo regular medical check-ups. "In order to stay free from heart diseases have a healthy diet to prevent or reduce high blood pressure and cholesterol, lose weight if you are overweight, quit smoking, restrict your salt intake, reduce stress and exercise regularly," says Dr Hasmukh Ravat, interventional cardiologist, Fortis Hospital.

ing gums or gingivitis and periodontitis. **Expert speak:** "Regular cleaning by a dentist will avoid most problems. In initial bleeding cases, deep cleaning with or without gum surgery can take care of periodontal diseases. Loose teeth can be made firm by joining them to each other. Very loose teeth need extraction and replacement with removable dentures or implants. Flared teeth can be corrected with braces. For yellow teeth, whitening is a safe, non-invasive procedure. Notched teeth can be filled with tooth coloured fillings, but if the notching is very deep, a root canal maybe required," says Dr Mukul Dabholkar, dental surgeon.

SKIN WOES

Some of the most visible signs of ageing are fine lines, wrinkles, black spots, dry and rough skin, skin pigmentation, open pores, decrease in skin elasticity and loss of volume.

Expert speak: "Avoid exposure to UV rays and use a sunscreen of SPF 30+." Regular moisturising helps keep the skin young and supple. Vitamin B complex supplements and adequate antioxidants in the form of fresh fruits keep the skin healthy," says Dr Mohan Thomas, senior cosmetologist, Breach Candy Hospital.

VISION LOSS

There are many problems that affect your vision as you grow older, like the need for reading glasses, cataract, glaucoma, age related macular degeneration (ARMD) and diabetic retinopathy.

Expert speak: "Visiting your eye specialist regularly is a must to catch any early symptoms. Any change in vision can be easily corrected through numbered glasses. For cataract, depending upon the opacity of the lens, your doctor will advise surgery. Glaucoma and ARMD can be controlled through medication, while surgery is used as the last resort. If you are diabetic or at a risk of diabetes, keep your sugar levels under control," says Dr Anagha Heroor, ophthalmologist, Anil Eye Hospital.

WEAK BLADDER

A weak bladder could lead to urinary incontinence that could lead to mild leaking and uncontrollable wetting.

Expert Speak: According to the American Association of Family Physicians, if caused by a medical problem, the incontinence will go away when treated through management, medicines or surgery. Kegel exercises and bladder training help in prevention by strengthening the pelvic muscles.

TEETHING ISSUES

Many elders have yellow teeth, flared teeth, shaking teeth, notches at the tooth sides, sharp edges and painful cuts at the corners of the mouth. This can lead to bleed-

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DON'T LOSE YOUR LEGS

People with high BP, cholesterol, heart disease and who use tobacco have a high risk of developing non-healing wounds and gangrene following injuries and infection because of poor blood supply due to blockages of arteries. The leg is usually cold and wounds do not heal in spite of treatment by a local doctor or surgeon.

The person must ask their doctor to look for the pulse in the leg and if absent should definitely see a vascular specialist to save their leg.

The vascular surgeon will confirm presence of arterial blockage by doing a detailed examination and measuring the "Ankle-Brachial index or ABI". Value below 0.3 is serious and gangrene is eminent unless circulation is improved urgently. "Target lesion revascularization" is the key to saving limbs successfully. Bypass is reserved for blockages over a very long length or across joints using the patient's own vein or by using artificial arteries called grafts.

In addition to all these techniques the real secret of saving limbs is identifying the limbs that are at risk before the first cut is made by any doctor or surgeon and doing surgery only after the circulation has been improved.

If the arteries that are affected are very small or if the blockage involves short segments, one may be able to improve blood flow without any surgical cuts. The



Dr. Paresh Pai

technique used is called "Endovascular Surgery" and involves balloon angioplasty ± stenting. It is now possible to open arteries even as far as the foot using thin wires and balloons, allowing blood flow to reach the area where it is needed. "Target lesion revascularization" is the key to saving limbs successfully. Bypass is reserved for blockages over a very long length or across joints using the patient's own vein or by using artificial arteries called grafts.

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Why wait for legs to look ugly?

Varicose veins are swollen and enlarged veins which are usually blue or dark purple and may look lumpy, bulging, or twisted in appearance. Needless to say, they are ugly. About 30% of Indian women suffer from varicose veins that are painful; but do not treat them in time or may not know that effective treatment is available, due to very low awareness levels.

Causes of varicose veins:

In a healthy vein, blood flows smoothly back to the heart, and is prevented from flowing backwards by a series of tiny valves. If these valves weaken, or are damaged, the blood can flow backwards, and can collect in the vein, eventually causing it to be varicose [dilated and tortuous]. Our 'calf muscles' are the 'hidden pumps' of the lower body pumping blood up towards the heart and a calf muscle pump failure will cause varicose veins. Varicose veins can arise during pregnancy and may persist even after child birth. Standing for long hours may also cause it, making it a professional hazard for traffic police, surgeons, bus conductors, etc.

Symptoms of varicose veins:
Some people with varicose veins



may not experience any pain or discomfort, while others are more severely affected and suffer from aching, swollen, and painful legs. Other symptoms include burning, or throbbing pain or muscle cramp in your legs (particularly at night), and dry, itchy and thin skin over the affected vein. Sometimes these veins can bleed and ulceration in the ankle area is a major complication.

Prevention of varicose veins:

In general, people eating a high fiber diet appear to have a reduced risk of varicose veins. As a rule, one must avoid sitting or standing still for long periods; and should try to move around at least once every 30 minutes. One should also avoid crossing legs because this can adversely affect circulation. Exercising regularly is a great way of keeping ones legs active and prevent blood stagnation in legs.

Treatment of varicose veins:

During early stages, compression stockings help in giving relief to tired & swollen legs. However, visible varicosities with symptoms usually need active treatment in the form of injections sclerotherapy, laser treatment or sometimes even conventional open surgery. Needless to say, every patient needs individualization of treatment, some patients requiring a combination of all the modalities. None of these treatments need hospitalization and are usually performed as day care procedures.

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