

Importance of Heart-Healthy Diet

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ABSTRACT Prevalence of cardiac diseases is on the rise and is at alarming rate in the Indian subcontinent. Diet, life-style factors and stress are the cardinal factors in the aetio- pathogenesis of coronary diseases. Other important risk factors are history of smoking, high BP, increased cholesterol level, diabetes and atherosclerosis, abdominal obesity, high triglycerides, insulin resistance, increased homocysteine level in blood and increase in fibrinogen with defects in fibrinolysis. Inter-population differences exist in both the diet and in the socio-cultural factors within and outside the Indian subcontinent. The dietary pattern, eating and method of cooking vary in different parts of India. Currently, there is much controversy over the best balance in carbohydrates, fats, and protein. Although dietary approaches differ in important aspects, they have some recommendations in common: everyone puts much stress in the value of fiber-rich whole grains, legumes, and fresh fruits and vegetables, and when fats are recommended, they are mainly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Weight control and exercise are essential components of any diet program. Reduction of all kinds of stress through stress reduction programmes is beneficial. A combined approach will play a rich dividend in control of cardiac diseases.