

LOVE YOUR HEART

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN IMPACT THE HEALTH OF YOUR HEART BY THE FEELINGS YOU HAVE?

By Dr. Cathy

Poets and songwriters throughout the ages have written scores of metaphors about the heartbreak one feels when losing a loved one, experiencing rejection from a lover or someone of high regard, or disappointments from expectations never manifested. The reality is that life's traumas and challenges can undermine the heart's health when certain emotions are attached.

We take setbacks to heart – quite literally.

As we teach in our Tuesday evening Health Class at Absolute Health Chiropractic, emotions are necessary in interpreting our life experiences; feelings are the juicy vital components to living that bring great joy and purpose on one end of the spectrum as well as pain and sadness on the other. It's in the staying of emotions like **depression**, **anger**, and **anxiety** that create stresses and aggravations to our heart's functions. Stress derived from negative emotions account for nearly 30% of all heart attacks, according to a 2004 Interheart research study of heart disease in 24,000 people in 53 countries. * It would be wise for us to review what we can do to not become part of this statistic!

Depression

The theory that depression can contribute to heart disease is gaining widespread popularity among mental health experts. Depression can cause the hardening of your heart's arteries by revving up stress hormones, which cause blood platelets to become sticky. This blood thickening of platelet-packed blood damages blood vessels and causes artery walls to harden and thicken over time.

If you are experiencing lengthy periods of mental sluggishness, low moods, fatigue, insomnia and feelings of hopelessness, talk to your primary health care physician to evaluate your condition. The following are steps you can take to help reverse the intensity of depression.

Exercise!

Exercise elevates your mood by infusing the brain and the body with feel-good chemicals. Four neurochemicals in particular that are tied into exercise and mood are Serotonin (the mood elevator), Epinephrine (the "fight or flight" responder), Dopamine (sleep/ wake cycles), and Endorphin (body's natural painkiller).

Chronic stress and anxiety, and inactivity can deplete all of these neurochemicals, resulting in depression.

The good news is that depending on the activity, you can rev up all four of these guys naturally! Exercises that require very high intensity levels, such as sprinting, weight training, or sports like lacrosse, tennis and soccer, will elevate epinephrine levels. Low to moderate intensity exercises that require more endurance than power will stimulate a rise in serotonin and indirectly dopamine.



Endorphins are independent of types or intensities of exercise but are definitely connected to frequency. The more we exercise, the more endorphins are released and we feel pretty good!

Find time to exercise **30 minutes a day x 5 days a week**. Mix it up so that variety keeps you engaged. Your heart will love you for it!

5-HTP

Low levels of serotonin are one major biochemical cause of depression.

5-HTP (5 hydroxytryptophan) is a naturally occurring amino acid and precursor to the inhibitory neurotransmitter serotonin. Taken in capsule or spray formula, 100mg of 5-HTP is targeted for low mood and helps lift depression.

5-HTP Neurotransmitter Support by NeuroScience, Inc. available for purchase at **Absolute Health Chiropractic**. Other services include Neurotransmitter evaluation, testing and support supplements.

Take your Omegas

In 2004, the US FDA (Food and Drug Administration) finally gave "qualified health claim" status to EPA-DHA fatty acids, derived from fish oil, for reducing the risk of coronary heart disease.

Omega-3's in fish oil stimulate blood circulation, reduce blood pressure and decrease triglyceride levels and growth of plaque.

There is promising evidence that omega-3 supplementation from fish oil are helpful in cases of depression and anxiety, alone or in conjunction with other medication.

Metagenics EPA-DHA 720 Omega-3 Fish Oils are available for purchase at **Absolute Health Chiropractic**.

Anger

Let's be honest, we all know what anger feels like. Someone cuts you off on the highway and before you know it, a rush of blood goes to your head and face, you clench your hands on the steering wheel and your heartbeat goes into overdrive. Uncontrolled anger has long-term physical effects on our body; increased adrenalin surges, high blood pressure, increased heart rate, possible injury to self or other. Constant agitation, feelings of guilt and failure and depression are all possible emotional outcomes of anger.

Hostility in any expression, whether overt or repressed, will put an incredible strain on the blood vessels and therefore hurts your heart.

Take Emotional Inventory

Is your anger justified? Anger, used appropriately, can be a very useful emotion in getting the attention of another or an end result accomplished. It takes courage to admit when your anger is out of control, but honesty is essential in tackling the problem.

Assess your reactions with the following Anger Check-list devised by Dr. Redford Williams, Director of Behavioral Research at Duke Medical Center and author of "Anger Kills":

- Is this something that is important to me?
- Is my response appropriate to the situation?
- Is there anything I can do about it?
- Is taking action worth it in this situation?



If you answer "NO" to any one of these questions, then you should talk yourself down, take deep breaths, count to 10 and allow the internal to calm down.

If the answer is "YES" to all four questions, then it's your choice to do something to change the situation, in a calm and assertive manner.

Notice that this takes PRACTICE, but the more you are AWARE of your feelings of anger, the more control you have.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a generalized mood state; a result of threats that are perceived to be uncontrollable or unavoidable. Women are more prone to this emotion and its sister emotion, Worry, as our ancestors were vigilant in protecting their offspring from predators and natural disasters. Anxiety and worry serve us in appropriate situations where protection or action is needed but when anxiety runs rampant, blood pressure climbs, heart rate skyrockets and blood vessels dilate.

Calm Down

Meditative forms of exercise such as chi gong, yoga or a walk in the park will slow down the mind and the body. Find a quiet space to listen to soothing music or read a supportive book, such as **Rays of the Dawn** by Dr. Thurman Fleet, to deal with quieting and redirecting the emotions. If you already own a copy, read the chapters of Worry and Hope for a vibration reversal.

Change Your Diet

Nicotine, caffeine, refined sugars, trans fats, and processed foods instigate energy surges and release stress hormones that exacerbate heart palpitations and contribute to further agitation and anxiety. They also help create deficiencies in our diet, denying the body important vitamins and minerals that stabilize emotional balance and healthy heart function.

Studies have shown that symptoms of anxiety and depression can be alleviated naturally by certain foods, which are listed below with their associated benefits.

- Chicken, salmon, tuna and mushrooms are rich in **Niacin (B3)**, a huge supporter of neurotransmission of the brain. Deficiencies in Niacin are linked to depression and anxiety.
- Tuna, black beans, and sunflower seeds are rich in **Thiamin (B1)**. Low levels of thiamine can cause restless nerves and irritability.
- Bell peppers, spinach, tuna and bananas are great sources of vitamin **B6**, the vitamin most responsible for the manufacture of serotonin, and the leveling of feelings linked to anxiety and depression.
- Scallops, yogurt, and venison contain vitamin **B12**, a vital nutrient that promotes proper development of nerve cells and metabolism of proteins, carbs and fats. Clinical depression, memory loss, heart palpitations and fatigue are linked to B12 deficiency.
- Pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds, spinach, soya beans, figs, beans/lentils are sources for **magnesium**, the anti-stress mineral. Magnesium is responsible for muscle and nerve relaxation.



Sometimes it's not possible to get the right amounts and varieties of these foods every day, therefore adding a well-formulated multi-vitamin/mineral dietary supplement will cover your bases.

Metagenics Multigenics Optimum Multiple Vitamin/Mineral Formula available for purchase at **Absolute Health Chiropractic**.

* Yusuf S, Hawken S, Ounpuu S, on behalf of the INTERHEART Study Investigators. Effect of potentially modifiable risk factors associated with myocardial infarction in 52 countries (the INTERHEART study): case-control study. *Lancet*. 2004;364:937-952.

Rosengren A, Hawken S, Ounpuu S, et al, for the INTERHEART investigators. Association of psychosocial risk factors with risk of acute myocardial infarction in 11 119 cases and 13 648 controls from 52 countries (the INTERHEART study): case-control study. *Lancet*. 2004;364:953-962.

Ezzati M. How can cross-country research on health risks strengthen interventions? Lessons from INTERHEART. *Lancet*. 2004;364:912-914.



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