

When Depression Is Heart Breaking

Doctors screening for heart problems check for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, and other factors, but sometimes don't ask about depression.

Many studies around the world show that depression is a factor in heart disease. Healthy patients with symptoms of depression have been shown to have as much as a 70 percent higher risk of having a heart attack.

More evidence about the link recently came from the Women's Health Initiative. Of the 93,000 women in the study, those who were depressed had a 50 percent greater risk of developing or dying from cardiovascular disease than women who had no signs of depression.

Everyone should take depression seriously. Talk to the doctor about depression just as you would discuss other health issues. Many treatments are available. Doctors know simple questions that can help screen for symptoms of depression. Common symptoms include a persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood; loss of interest in hobbies, sex, or other pleasurable activities; and insomnia.

For more information on depression, visit the National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov.

Painting: A Good Way to Relax



They're not exactly art, but they're more than a craft. Paint-by-number kits are now one of the most popular items in

craft stores. Devotees say painting horses and landscapes is relaxing, almost like meditation. If you're looking for a way to relax this summer, take up painting. Take a class or buy yourself a paint-by-number kit at a local craft store.

Diffuse Anger Before It Detonates

Everyone has experienced intense anger at one time or another – on the road, at work, at home, or on the playing field. Anger can sometimes be a healthy emotion if you know how to control and manage it appropriately. Properly handled, anger can be used to give you courage to stand up for yourself. It can be channeled into greater work energy, or give you the strength and inspiration to play harder at your sport. On the other hand, anger can be harmful. It's important for you to learn how to identify it, channel it, and extinguish it before it rages out of control.

Here are several tips:

- ◆ Manage your physical response. Some people experience increased heart rate, muscle tension, or an adrenaline rush that can leave them light-headed. Take



For more information on controlling your anger and other mental health issues, visit the National Mental Health Association at www.nmha.org.

deep breaths or practice tightening and relaxing your muscles.

- ◆ Learn to relax rather than being up-tight so often. Practice lying on your back with your eyes closed. Starting with your toes, flex all of your muscles for a few seconds.
- ◆ Recognize that life isn't fair. Don't get mad if you don't like the way things are. Do something to change the situation.
- ◆ Exercise. Cardiovascular activity will drain your anger and make you stronger. It could change your outlook on life. If you're very angry often, get professional advice.

Be Prepared for the Unthinkable

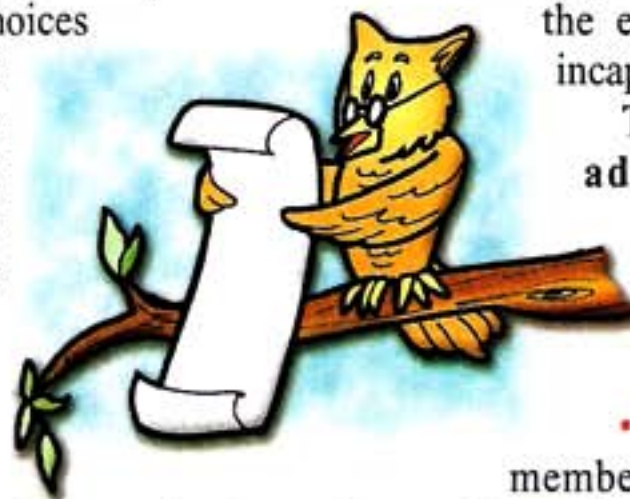
According to the U.S. Living Will Registry, 75 percent of Americans are in favor of advance directives. However, only 25-30 percent of Americans have actually prepared one.

An advance directive allows you to make your health care choices known in advance of an incapacitating illness. It's a legal document in which you state how you want to be treated in the event you become very ill and there's no reasonable hope for your recovery. Although laws vary from state to state in America, there are basically two kinds of directives:

- ◆ A living will is a legal document in which you state the kind of health care you want or don't want under certain

circumstances.

- ◆ A Health Care Proxy (a durable health care power of attorney) is a legal document in which you name someone close to you who can make decisions about your health care in the event you become incapacitated.



The benefits of an advance directive include:

- Help your family make tough decisions with your doctor.

- Relieve family members of feelings of guilt, anxiety, and remorse.
- Provides you with "peace of mind," knowing that your choices are available to your family and doctors even if you become incapacitated or ill away from home.

For more information on advance directives, visit www.uslivingwillregistry.com, or call 1-800-LIV-WILL.