

Preventing heart disease

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is also known as heart disease and is the biggest killer in Ireland. It includes conditions such as coronary heart disease (angina and heart attack) and stroke. In Ireland in 2000, heart disease was the number one cause of death and was responsible for 41% of all deaths.

I have more detailed articles on the risk factors for heart disease including high blood pressure and cholesterol in Whelehans or at www.whelehans.ie. If you are concerned about your risk of heart disease, Whelehans now have a new heart screening service. The screening takes less than half an hour. Our pharmacist will check your blood pressure, your cholesterol, blood glucose (for diabetes) and your body mass index. We will calculate your percentage risk of heart disease within the next 10 years based on the results. You can simply ring us at 04493 34591 to book your appointment.

Risk factors

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is one of the biggest factors for heart disease. High BP affects up to 50% of middle-aged and older people. High BP has no symptoms so routine checks are essential, especially on those over 50. Trials have shown that achieving the recommended blood pressure of 140/90 gives a 42% reduction in stroke, a 14% reduction in heart attacks and a 21% reduction in cardiovascular deaths. There is evidence that high blood pressure can increase risk of dementia in later life. In Whelehans we can check your blood pressure for free.

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is another big factor for heart disease. The World Health Organisation estimates that almost 20% of strokes and 50% of heart attacks are linked to high cholesterol. The amount of cholesterol present in the blood can range from 3.6 to 7.8 mmol/litre. A level above 6 mmol/litre is considered high. Evidence strongly indicates that high cholesterol levels can cause narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis), heart attacks, and strokes. Our genes has the biggest influence on our cholesterol level, however diet also has a big influence.

Modifiable lifestyle changes

Modifiable risk factors are factors a person has influence over and can make a decision to change. The single most important modifiable risk factor is smoking. Smokers in their 30s and 40s are five times more likely to have a heart attack than non-smokers. Other factors that reduce the risk of heart disease include regular exercise (equivalent to brisk walking for 3 hours or more per week) and loss of weight in overweight or obese people. Making healthier food choices with reduction in consumption of saturated fat and salt and increased consumption of oily fish and fruit and vegetables is recommended. Moderation of alcohol intake (to less than 2 units per day in females and 3 units per day in males) will reduce cardiovascular risk.

Non-Modifiable risk factors

Non modifiable risk factors are factors a person cannot change and include age, sex, and family history of heart disease. Before menopause, women have a lower risk of heart disease than men of the same age but after menopause, their risk is similar.

Supplements than can help reduce risk of heart disease

There is no better way to prevent heart disease than eating healthy and exercising. However some supplements can reduce your risk of heart disease. Whelehans now have our own range of vitamins supplements including some that can help prevent and fight heart disease.

Lecithin

Lecithin reduces cholesterol by binding cholesterol and fats to water in your intestinal tract, hence reducing the absorption of cholesterol. There is scientific evidence of its benefit. Whelehans Lecithin 1200mg capsules are only " 6.99 per 90 and the directions is one or two per day.

Omega-3

Fish oil stimulates blood circulation, increases the breakdown of fibrin, a compound involved in clot and scar formation, and additionally has been shown to reduce blood pressure. There is strong scientific evidence that omega fatty acids reduce blood triglyceride levels and regular intake reduces the risk of secondary and primary heart attack. Omega 3 supplements are beneficial if you don't eat a lot of fish. Whelehans Omega 3 supplement is " 5.50 per 30.

Garlic

Garlic is beneficial in preventing heart disease in many ways. Some recent studies show that it beneficial in lowering total cholesterol including bad LDL cholesterol. It may help in preventing clots and there is some evidence of its benefits in lowering blood pressure. Whelehans Odourless one a day Garlic Capsules are " 3.95 per 30 pack. Garlic is also a powerful antioxidant and is great for preventing and fighting colds.

Co Enzyme Q10

If you already take a cholesterol lowering drug called a statin, you may benefit from Co-Enzyme Q10. Statins reduce Co Enzyme Q10, a vital nutrient in almost every cell of the body. It is a powerful antioxidant and immune system enhancer. Whelehans Co Q10 (Price " 14.99) contains 100mg of Co Enzyme Q10 so helps prevent side effects of statins such as:

- Headaches
- Tired aching muscles
- Muscle cramps
- General fatigue

Statins include Atorvastatin (ie) Lipitor[®], Pravastatin (ie) Lipostat[®], Pravatin[®], Bystat[®], Rosuvastatin (ie) Crestor[®], Rosuva[®] and Simvastatin (ie) Zocor[®], Inegy[®], Sivatin[®]

Weight loss

Whelehans also have an excellent weight loss clinic which includes a privately weekly weigh in to give you the motivation and support to lose weight. Reducing weight is an important way of reducing risk of heart disease. Our weight loss clinic takes place every Monday. Whelehans provide a weight loss support supplement called Tone & Slim[®]. Tone & Slim[®] provides CLA, a fatty acid which we lack in our normal diet. CLA tones up slack muscle and reduces existing body fat. Additional help with weight loss will be obtained from Sanafil[®], a supplement formulated to naturally reduce appetite.

Health Screening

You can book our heart screening service in store or by calling us at 04493 34591. Screening takes less than half an hour and includes a check by our pharmacist for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose (diabetes) and body mass index. Our screening takes place in a private consultation room. You will get a printout of your results.

Disclaimer: Please ensure you consult with your healthcare professional before making any changes recommended

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans, log on to www.whelehans.ie or dial 04493 34591. You can find us on Facebook.