

February is the month of love. But it is *also* Heart Health Month. Now if you are a 20 or 30 something year old millennial reading this article, you may wonder why this topic is of relevance to you. Please read on.

Many of us have loved ones and friends who suffer from heart disease. Public health estimates indicate that the India will account for approximately **60%** of the world's heart disease burden, despite having less than **20%** of the world's population. Heart disease is the leading cause of mortality and a silent epidemic among South Asians.

Heart disease does **not** just impact the elderly. When it impacts South Asians, it tends to do so at an **earlier age**. *Half* of all heart attacks in South Asian men occur under the age of 50 and a *quarter* occur under the age of 40! Heart disease is **not** just an issue for South Asian men. A South Asian woman's lifetime risk of dying from heart disease is eight times greater than that of breast cancer!

Why South Asians? We are at risk due to a combination of genetic and lifestyle factors. Genetically, we are at higher risk of diabetes and abnormal lipid profile. South Asian millennials in particular are at risk due to a lifestyle factors such as smoking, increased sedentary lifestyle and abnormal sleep cycles among professionals such as call center workers, and increasing fast food and processed carbohydrates.

What can **you** do? Here are five steps you can take today to get yourself on a heart healthy path.

- 1) Education is the most important step. By reading this article you have already made the first step. Please visit www.indianheartassociation.org and join the Indian Heart Association Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/indianheartassociation>. Share these links with your parents and other loved ones!
- 2) Try cooking at home one night this week instead of going out. You don't need to be an expert to cook heart healthy South Asian meals with decreased processed carbohydrates and avoidance of unhealthy fats. You can download a free heart healthy South Asian cookbook with simple, delicious recipes: <https://southasianheartcenter.org/cookbook>
- 3) Grab a friend and go for an evening or morning walk. Daily physical activity for 30 minutes daily (moderate intensity such as walking) at least five days per week can both be fun and help your heart!
- 4) Its never too early to speak to your physician! Schedule your annual checkup. Your physician will be able to discuss your personal risk for cardiovascular disease with you, order labs and other testing if needed, and manage your risk factors.
- 5) Manage your stress and rejuvenate yourself. Daily deep breathing, prayer, or meditation can improve your well-being. Try to sleep at a regular time tonight and get 8 hours of restful sleep.

The Indian Heart Association is excited to partner with the The Teal Mango to raise awareness about heart disease among South Asian millennials. The Indian Heart Association (IHA) is a cardiac health NGO founded Harvard and Berkeley trained physicians Dr. Sishir Rao, MD and Dr. Sevith Rao, MD. The major goal of our organization is to raise awareness about preventative cardiovascular health through a combination of online outreach and grassroots advocacy. We were honored by an appointment by the Government of India to the Thoracic and Cardiovascular Instrumentation Subcommittee of the Bureau of Indian Standards. The IHA has also been invited by The Economist to the September 2017 Heart Health Asia Summit in Seoul, South Korea, where our founder Sevith Rao was an invited panel speaker on the topic of “Cardiovascular Disease in Emerging Markets” to collaborate with policy leaders on pan Asia strategies to combat cardiac disease.

References:

www.indianheartassociation.org

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