

Conley's United Methodist Church
January 2008

Dealing with Pain

According to one medical resource over 2,000 disease conditions are characterized by pain. Until we get to heaven, pain is God's way of telling us something is wrong. It doesn't mean God is punishing us.

Acute Pain. This is short-term pain. Something triggers the pain, but once the trigger is removed, the pain stops. Common causes of acute pain are trauma, toxin, deficiencies and stress.

Chronic pain. This is pain that persists after the trigger is removed. For instance, chronic back pain and chronic headaches persist long after the trauma that caused them. This happens because of the way our nerves are constructed. Nerves don't really feel pain; they merely sense simulation. In chronic pain the signal goes from the nerve ending to the spine. From the spine it travels to the brain for interpretation. Then a signal goes back along that route from the brain to spine to nerve endings. In chronic pain, the return signal is not switched off when the irritation is gone. Instead, it is amplified.

Being in pain can affect nearly every part of your life. As if the pain itself isn't bad enough, it also can cause sleep problems, problems working, tiredness, negative emotions, inability to enjoy simple pleasures and lack of involvement in activities you once enjoyed. Pain also brings with it fear, anxiety and depression. Anxiety and stress can lower your tolerance to pain.

God heals through medicines. Even though medicines are available to help all kinds of pain, some people are afraid to take them because of a fear about addiction.

The truth is that your risk of getting addicted to these drugs is low when you take them properly and under a doctor's care. OxyContin is a powerful morphine-like narcotic that is used to relieve moderate to severe chronic pain. Many people become addicted, however, because they are not taking the medication as prescribed. Many people increase their dosage without talking to their doctor, for

instance. Also, do not break or crush your pills. Always protect your pain medication from being stolen. Never share your medication with others. Throw out your medication after your doctor takes you off them. Taking morphine does not mean death is near. It merely means that your pain level requires something stronger to help you feel less pain.

God heals through doctors. Pain is a part of life. Many times people resist telling the doctor about their pain because they feel it is just part of the illness they have to endure. The result is needless suffering. Don't resist talking to your doctor about pain you are having. Your doctor will want to know

Where it hurts	If it's constant or continuing
When the pain started	If anything relieves the pain
What you have been doing to deal with the pain (OTC pain killers or practicing relaxation techniques)	or makes it worse
	How it affects your daily life

God heals beyond medicine. There are other things you can do to try to manage your pain. Physical activity

Joining a support group	Going for counseling
Using pain specialists or pain clinics	Practicing Relaxation Techniques like guided imagery which
Message/Aroma Therapy (used in many hospitals)	redirects your mind and feelings away from your
Meditation	current surroundings

Our church has regularly scheduled healing services that focus on God's healing power. They are Saturday Jan 19 and Sunday Feb 10 at 10:30 am. People from the Health Ministry are also commissioned by Pastor Randy to come to you, pray and anoint with oil. Call the church office to ask for this service.

God is faithful during our pain. Above all, go to God in prayer and ask for healing. Remember Psalm 145:17-19, "The Lord is fair in everything he does, and full of kind-ness. He is so close to all who call upon him sincerely. He fulfills the desires of those who reverence and trust him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them."

Conley's United Methodist Church

February 2008

The Benefits of Love and Touch

During the month of February we often show our love for someone by exchanging a valentine card or gift. How good it feels to know you are loved like when someone shakes your hand or gives you a hug. Well, there are very good God-given reasons for that feeling of warmth. Mother Teresa once said that the greatest disease of mankind is the absence of love.

God's word also gives love the place of top priority. Jesus declared that all the commandments are summed up in this: "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Matthew 22:39). Doing these two things --loving both ourselves and our neighbor--are both very important to our spiritual and our physical health.

If God instructs us to love our neighbor in the same way that we love ourselves, then the question is: How do we love ourselves? Loving ourselves begins with receiving God's love for us and realizing that we have worth and value to God and that He has a purpose for us in this life.

In the physical realm, the way we love ourselves is by taking care of our bodies. This includes eating the right foods, getting sufficient rest and exercise, maintaining good hygiene and taking care of our skin--perhaps even occasionally treating ourselves to a massage or facial.

Touch is powerful. For many, it's stronger than verbal or emotional contact and affects almost everything we do. Researchers describe meaningful touch as a gentle touch, stroke, kiss or hug given by significant people in our lives. Touch becomes meaningful when the one touching desires to bless the one touched and reaches out for their benefit, not their own.

A study conducted at New York University, discovered that both the toucher and the one touched receive a physiological benefit. It was observed that hemoglobin levels in both people's blood-streams increase during the act of touching. As hemoglobin levels are invigorated, body tissues receive more oxygen. This rise of oxygen energizes a person and can even aid in the regenerative process if he or she is ill.

In addition to physically blessing others, meaningful touch determines how we view people and deeply affects our ability to build good relationships. In one study, librarians were asked to touch the hands of every other student as they handed back their library cards.

When the students were interviewed, those touched described far greater positive feelings about the library and the librarian.

Research confirms that it takes eight to ten meaningful touches a day to maintain emotional and physical health. In the absence of touching and being touched, people can become sick and touch-starved. Other studies revealed that meaningful touch can lower blood pressure, protect children from immoral relationships when they grow older and even add years to our lives.

Loving our neighbors as well as ourselves the way Jesus did is the best valentine in the world.

Ten Commandments for a Heart-Healthy Temple

St. Paul said that the body is a holy place, a temple for the Holy Spirit to reside. Our health affects our spiritual lives (and vice versa).

Consider these ten commandments:

1. You shall have your blood pressure checked regularly.
2. You shall not smoke cigarettes or other tobacco products.
3. You shall eat a low-fat diet.
4. You shall eat a low-cholesterol diet.
5. You shall have your blood cholesterol level checked regularly.
6. You shall limit the amount of salt in cooking and at meals.
7. You shall be physically active.
8. You shall maintain your proper weight.
9. You shall know the warning signs of heart attack and stroke and know the proper first actions to take.
10. You shall know the risk factors for heart disease.

The American Heart Association has many great ideas about a strong, healthy heart. They have specific recommendations about fat, cholesterol and salt intake. Look at their website: www.AmericanHeart.org. Also, ask your doctor about your healthy heart.

Beebe Medical Center 4th Annual Community Health Fair on Thursday, February 21 from 10-2 at Rehoboth Beach Convention Center.

Free blood pressure tests after worship today. Saturday – Sue Woodward; Sunday – Anne Bothmann.

If you have had CPR/AED training at church, you might want to purchase your own pocket mask. Keep it with you at all times. They're only \$10. Mark your green sheet or contact John Schmitt (644-0510) if you'd like one.

Conley's United Methodist Church

March, 2008

Healthy Living

What comes to mind when you think of taking risks with your health--driving recklessly, abusing alcohol or illegal drugs? Those behaviors are certainly risky. However, many people have less dramatic behaviors that are just as dangerous in the long run. Tobacco use, unbalanced nutrition and a lack of physical activity are some of the key risk factors for the most common causes of death.

What are the most common causes of death?

Heart disease, cancer and stroke are the most common causes of death in the U.S. Nearly 1.5 million people in the U.S. die each year from one of these diseases or from complications of these diseases. That's more than the number of American soldiers who died in the Civil War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War combined, and it happens EVERY YEAR!

The Top Ten causes of Death (in order)

1. Heart disease
2. Cancer
3. Stroke
4. Chronic lower respiratory disease
5. Accidents (many are alcohol-related)
6. Diabetes
7. Flu and pneumonia
8. Alzheimer's disease
9. Kidney disease
10. Infection

Don't these diseases run in families? How much control do I really have?

It's true that heart disease, stroke and some kinds of cancer tend to occur more often in people who have a family history of the disease. However, your genes are only part of your risk for these diseases. In many cases, your behavior is at least as important to your health as your family history. If you choose unhealthy behaviors, you are at greater risk of having a serious health problem.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

1. Quit smoking, or don't start
2. Eat fewer high-fat foods; and eat more fruits and vegetables
3. Be more physically active.

Is it better to have an exercise plan instead of just trying to be more physically active throughout the day?

Ideally, we would all get enough exercise in our daily lives to burn the energy that we get from eating food. Unfortunately, many things about modern life lets us avoid being physically active. For example, many people drive almost everywhere they go, and many jobs require people to sit at a desk for much of the day.

One obvious way to burn more energy is to participate in structured exercise, such as aerobics or golf. However, you can also burn energy by adding more movement to your everyday activities. For example, try parking your car at the end of the church parking lot instead of the spot closest to the door. Take stairs instead of elevators when going to doctor appointments. Cut your nap time in half by walking 15 minutes outside.

I've tried these changes before...they just don't work.

Change is hard and breaking unhealthy habits is even harder. Set goals that are obtainable.

For instance, try eating a piece of fruit with every meal. That is simple and easy to do. Within a few weeks, you will automatically include fruit in your diet. Once your new healthy behavior becomes a habit, you can move on to another goal. For instance, strolling around the block 3 times a week. And if walking is something you are interested in doing, ask a neighbor or friend to join you. The walk becomes much more enjoyable.

And always remember that you are not alone in your mission to take control of your life and health...**You can count on God for help:**

*All those who know your mercy, Lord, will count on you for help.
For you have never yet forsaken those who trust in you.*

Psalm 9:10



Free blood pressure tests after worship today.

Saturday – Sue Woodward; Sunday – Anne Bothmann.

Conley's United Methodist Church
April, 2008

Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is a growing concern for parents as well as healthcare professionals. The prevalence of obesity among children in the US increased by 100% between 1980 and 1990. Being overweight brings serious health concerns for children including diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and orthopedic problems, such as increased stress on joints. Self esteem also decreases when children are overweight.

Genetic factors play a role in a child's risk of being overweight, but obesity rates have tripled in the past 30 years, while genes have not changed. That means that the recent widespread obesity problem is primarily caused by environmental factors.

Environmental factors include what we're eating, how active we are and our family structure.

What We're Eating:

As parents, think back to what you ate and what you did for activities during your childhood.

In the 1950's, people ate fast food maybe once a month as a treat or special occasion.

Today, most children in the US have fast food at least once a week and the portions are over-sized. Typical fast food meals are high in refined starch and added sugar.

Overall, children should eat less refined grains and concentrated sugars. They should eat more fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, unprocessed grains, adequate protein and healthful oils such as olive oil, avocados, nuts, and omega 3 fats.

Soft Drinks:

Soft drinks are another likely reason for increased childhood obesity. In the 1950's, children had 3 cups of milk for every one cup of soda. One study found that every additional serving of soda per day increased a child's odds of becoming obese by 1.6 times.

How Active We Are:

Instead of playing outside, children are watching a massive amount of television and playing video games.

Television typically advertises some of the worst kinds of foods for you. This in turn, undermines parents attempts to teach their children healthy eating.

The Family Structure:

In today's society, it seems that everyone is working too hard and too long to support an increasingly materialistic lifestyle. Parents aren't spending quality time with their children, teaching them good nutrition or being active with them. Do you remember when dinner was cooked and everyone ate it together on a regular basis?

Parents need to set a good example for their children by being active and planning family activities such as biking, hiking, running, walking, swimming or skating.

The answer to childhood obesity is not difficult but is quite simple: **Let's try to return to more traditional ways of eating, exercising and being with our families.**

Remember, there is never a circumstance you encounter in which you and your family are alone. As parents, dedicate your family to the Lord.

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous:
but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*

Psalm 34:19



Free blood pressure tests after worship today.

Saturday – Sue Woodward; Sunday – Anne Bothmann.

Conley's United Methodist Church

May, 2008

LYME'S DISEASE

In last month's health tip (Childhood Obesity), you were encouraged to go outside for exercise and family time activities. Today's article is not to discourage you from outside activities but to educate you about Lyme's disease; what it is, what you can do to prevent it and what the treatment is.

God wants us to experience good health so we can enjoy the life He has given us.

*I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health,
just as your soul prospers.* 3 John 2

Lyme's disease is an infection caused by the *Borrelia Burgdorfei* bacterium. This bacterium is injected through the bite of several types of tiny black ticks. These ticks are found in certain parts of the country, including north and mid-atlantic states, the northern midwest and the west coast. These ticks are often found on white-footed mice and white-tailed deer most commonly living in woods and high grass. Lyme's disease attacks many of the body's organ systems, including the skin, heart, nervous system and joints.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE LYME'S?

Three to thirty days after being bitten by a tick, you may see a characteristic rash appear on your skin, consisting of one or more round or oval pink spot. The spot or spots are often clear in the middle like a bull's eye, and are often accompanied by symptoms such as headache, enlarged lymph nodes, muscle or joint pain and fatigue. The combination of symptoms and having recently been in an area where these particular ticks are prevalent makes Lyme's disease relatively easy to spot.

HOW IS LYME'S TREATED?

Stage 1 – Two to three weeks of antibiotic treatment early on is almost always effective. Problems can occur when not seen by a doctor until later in the disease, or in rare instances, when someone doesn't respond completely to treatment.

Stage 2 – These symptoms include arthritis, multiple bull's eye rashes and neurologic symptoms like meningitis and facial nerve paralysis and occur weeks or months after a tick bite if successful treatment has not been received. But, like Stage 1 Lyme's disease, antibiotic treatment is almost always effective.

State 3 – Lyme's disease in children is characterized by arthritis in major joints. Adults may show memory loss, mood changes and sleep disturbances; but these symptoms are very uncommon in children. Arthritis can occur weeks or even years after the initial infection, but again, oral

antibiotic treatment for 30 days is usually effective. If not, intravenous antibiotics may be helpful.

HOW SERIOUS IS LYME'S?

If you catch and treat the disease early, you'll achieve a full cure in close to 100% of the cases.

HOW CAN LYME'S DISEASE BE PREVENTED?

There is no vaccine available to prevent it, so it's important to try and avoid ticks and tick bites; or get treatment very early. Keeping in mind that ticks cannot bite through clothing, some general guidelines for prevention are to dress your family in light colored clothing so ticks are easily seen, wear long-sleeved shirts tucked into long pants which are tucked into socks and worn with closed-toe shoes. Check your family for ticks at least once a day, including 1) behind the knees, between fingers and toes, in the underarms and groin, 2) areas of pressure points—underwear and pants with elastic waistbands, 3) visually check body and hair, run fingers gently over the skin and run a fine-toothed comb through the hair. Ticks must be attached for more than 24 hours to transmit the disease, so one thorough check a day should be enough.

OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

Walk on cleared paths or pavement through wooded areas and fields when possible. Shower after all outdoor activities. It may take four to six hours for ticks to attach firmly to skin, so showering will help remove unattached ticks. Check pets.

USE INSECT REPELLANTS SAFELY

Products that contain DEET are tick repellants; however, they do not kill the tick and are not 100% effective. For children, use a repellant specifically made for children; and if the child is younger than one year, check with your physician before using a repellant.

If you find a tick that has been attached for more than 24 hours, pull it off carefully, put it in a bottle and take it to your doctor. If it is the tick that produces Lyme's disease, your doctor may be able to prescribe antibiotics to prevent the disease from developing.



Free blood pressure tests after worship today.

Saturday – Sue Woodward; Sunday – Anne Bothmann.

If you can assist with taking blood pressures, please contact **Sue Woodward (302-985-1252)**.

FOOD POISONING

June is the start of summer and that means warm weather and outdoor activities. We enjoy going to picnics and cooking outdoors. Along with the fun, however, we should be aware of safe food handling in order to prevent food poisoning.

WHAT IS FOOD POISONING?

Food poisoning is an illness caused by eating foods that have harmful organisms in them. These harmful germs include bacteria, parasites and viruses. They are mostly in raw meat, chicken, fish, and eggs but can spread to any type of food. They can also grow on food that is left out on counters or outdoors or is stored too long before you eat it. Sometimes food poisoning happens when people do not wash their hands before they touch food.

Most of the time, food poisoning is mild and goes away after a few days. All you can do is wait for your body to get rid of the germ causing the illness. However, some types of food poisoning are more serious, and you may need to see your doctor.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The first symptom is usually diarrhea. You may also feel sick to your stomach, vomit or have stomach cramps. If you have diarrhea or vomit a lot, you can become dehydrated. Signs of dehydration are dry mouth, feeling dizzy or passing small amounts of dark colored urine.

HOW DO HARMFUL GERMS GET INTO FOOD?

It is normal to find bacteria in the intestines of healthy animals that we use for food. Sometimes the bacteria gets mixed up in the parts of those animals that we eat.

If the water used to wash fresh fruits or vegetables is contaminated by germs from animal manure or human sewage, germs can get on the fruits and vegetables.

When someone who has germs on their hands touches food, or if one food touches another food that has germs on it, the germs can spread.

HOW IS FOOD POISONING TREATED?

In most cases, food poisoning goes away on its own in two to three days. All you need to do is rest and get plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Drink a cup of water each time you have a large, loose stool.

Antibiotics are usually not used to treat food poisoning. Medications that stop diarrhea can be helpful, but they should not be given to infants or young children.

If you think you are severely dehydrated, you may need to go to the hospital. With botulism or E. Coli infections, you may need medical care right away.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT FOOD POISONING?

Clean: Wash your hands often and always before you touch food. Keep your knives, cutting boards and counters clean. Wash them with hot, soapy water or put them in the dishwasher and use a disinfectant on your counter. Wash fresh fruit and vegetables.

Separate: Keep germs from raw meat away from fruits, vegetables and other foods. Put cooked meat on a clean platter, not back on the one that held the raw meat.

Cook: Make sure that meat, chicken, fish and eggs are fully cooked.

Chill: Refrigerate leftovers right away. Don't leave cut fruits and vegetables at room temperature for a long time.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT. IF YOU ARE NOT SURE A FOOD IS SAFE, DON'T EAT IT.



SNEAKERS FOR PUMPS

The HMC (Health Ministries Committee) is still accepting donations of good athletic shoes (men's or women's running shoes or heavy sneakers size 7 and up). We **cannot** accept smooth soled shoes (e.g., keds), work boots or children's shoes. You can place them in the box in the narthex.

The shoes go to an international economic development plan for Ghana, West Africa. Our goal is to donate 500 shoes so that we may adopt a family and have an ongoing relationship with them.

We are also accepting bicycles. It would like to donate a bike or have any questions about this marvelous program, please contact **Eileen Marx (302-875-0182)**.



Free blood pressure tests after worship today.

Saturday – Sue Woodward; **Sunday** – Bevann Kubala (8:45). If you can assist with taking blood pressures, please contact **Sue Woodward (302-985-1252)**.

Conley's United Methodist Church

July, 2008

Summer Safety

Although we make every effort to keep our children and grandchildren safe year-round, it is especially important in the summer when children are out of school.

Hot temperatures and more time spent outdoors can put kids' health and safety at risk.

Summer Heat

The most obvious hidden dangers in the summer simply have to do with the heat and can include:

- Heat stress and heat stroke, which can be prevented. Keep kids well-hydrated, take frequent breaks when playing outside, and watch for symptoms such as thirst, cramps, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headaches and fever. Never leave a child in a hot car. Never leave children play in a car.
- Getting burned on metal slides or other hot playground equipment.
- Sunburns. Although we are more aware of the risks of not applying sunscreen or sun block, sunburns are still common--especially if lotions are not used properly.

Water Safety Tips

Many families try to escape the summer heat in a pool, lake or the beach. To keep your kids safe around water be sure to:

- childproof your pool by enclosing it in a fence with a self-closing and self-latching gate.
- supervise children around the pool, even if they know how to swim.
- children who don't know how to swim should wear a life vest instead of "floaties" when they are in the pool.
- children should always wear a life vest when on a boat.
- children should take swimming lessons around four to five years of age--the age at which most children are able to learn.

Other Summer Safety Tips

You can also keep your children safe this summer by:

- keeping younger children away from lawn mowers. Despite the need for a summer job or those simply wanting to help, remember that the American Academy of Pediatrics advises that children younger than 16 years old should NOT be

permitted to use ride-on mowers; children younger than 12 should not use walk-behind mowers.

- using insect repellents when necessary.
- doing a daily tick check if your children have been playing outdoors, especially in or near wooded areas.
- outfitting them with appropriate protective gear--helmet and pads--when they ride a bicycle, skateboard or scooter, or while wearing heelys.
- not allowing them to play with fireworks but visiting a public fireworks display instead.
- not eating food that has been left out for more than an hour at barbecues and family picnics due to the risk of food poisoning.
- teaching them to recognize and avoid poison ivy.
- keeping your home well child proofed. This includes keeping your prescription drugs well out of reach of young children and out of site for those with teens. Unfortunately, prescription drug abuse is a growing problem with teens and young adults.



STEPHEN MINISTRIES – There will be a meeting on August 13 at 7:00 p.m. in fellowship hall for anyone interested in participating in the Stephen Ministries.



Free blood pressure tests after worship today.

Saturday – Sue Woodward; **Sunday** – Anne Bothmann (8:45).
If you can assist with taking blood pressures, please contact **Sue Woodward (302-985-1252)**.

Conley's United Methodist Church

September, 2008

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.* Psalm 73:26

At some point in our lives we will hear the word cardiovascular disease. You or a loved one may be affected by this disease. Over the next couple of months I would like to attempt to explain these diseases in a way that may help you understand them better. The topics covered will be: What is a heart disease? What is heart failure? What is a heart attack and coronary artery disease? What is peripheral artery disease or PAD? What is angioplasty bypass and valve surgery?

Broken down, the term **cardiovascular** means: **cardio** or **heart** and **vascular** or **vessels**. Anything that affects one part will impact the other as the heart and blood vessels make up the circulatory system. **Heart disease** is the No. 1 killer in the USA. Heart disease affects the heart's valves (valves ensure that the blood in your heart is pumped in the correct direction), muscle (which pumps the blood the body needs) and coronary arteries/veins (which carry blood to and from the heart muscle).

Heart Failure occurs when the heart cannot pump enough blood to meet the need of your body's organs or tissues. Heart failure does not mean that your heart has stopped functioning, but that it isn't functioning as well as it should. Heart failure can occur suddenly or develop over a period of years. Heart failure always requires treatment.

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is a condition used to describe a blockage of blood flow in the arteries to the heart. The most common cause is atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis occurs when the arterial walls thicken and stiffen because of buildup of fatty deposits (plaque) inside the arteries.

Coronary Heart Disease is a more general term describing coronary artery diseases resulting from chest pain (angina) or heart attack (myocardial infarction).

Cardiomyopathy is a term used to describe a variety of diseases that affects the heart's muscle. Causes of cardiomyopathy could be either genetic or more often than not, simply unknown.

Valvular Heart Disease is a disease of the heart valves. There are 4 chambers of your heart, all of which are connected by valves that keep the blood flowing in the proper direction. Diseases of the heart valve would include leaking or improper closing.

Pericardial Disease is an inflammation of protective sac that surrounds the heart. (Pericardium)

Congenital Cardiovascular Disease affects the growth and development of the heart's muscle, chamber or valves. These conditions can be apparent at birth or take years to develop. Next month we will discuss heart failure in more depth.

School Days

Yes, parents, it's that time of year again, school supplies and clothes are on everyone's shopping list. But, don't forget your child's immunizations.

Because proof of immunization is often a prerequisite for enrollment in daycare or school, it's important to keep your child current on all vaccines. Recommended immunizations for children from birth to 6 years old include:

- Hepatitis B
- Rotavirus
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis
- Haemophilus influenzae type b
- Pneumococcal
- Inactivated poliovirus
- Influenza
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Varicella
- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal (for certain high-risk groups)

Teens may also need the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) and the meningococcal vaccine. Adolescent girls need the recommended HPV vaccine series. The annual flu vaccine is also available for children and teens. The complete updated schedule of immunizations for children from birth to age 18 can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Blessings, Sue Woodward/Health Ministries

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Part II of your Understanding Your Heart Series

What is Heart Failure

Your heart is divided into two sides, each of which has two chambers. The upper chamber is called the atrium. The atrium receives the blood. The lower chamber, the ventricle, pumps the blood back into your circulation. When any of these four chambers lose their ability to keep the blood flowing normally, **heart failure** is occurring. That is why heart failure patients often experience weakness and fatigue. A condition known as **congestive heart failure** occurs from the heart's inability to pump the blood normally, due to fluid buildup in the lungs or other parts of the body.

The most common causes of heart failure are:

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD): The clogging of the heart's arteries obstructs the flow of blood to the heart, which can seriously damage the heart's muscle. The remaining healthy heart muscle therefore has to work even harder to pump the blood your body needs.

High Blood Pressure (Hypertension): High blood pressure forces your heart to pump harder to keep enough blood circulating and can eventually make your heart's chambers larger and weaker.

Abnormal Heart Valves: When the valves don't open or close as they should, the heart muscle has to work harder to compensate.

Heart Muscle Disease (Cardiomyopathy) or Inflammation (Myocarditis): Any damage to the heart muscle can also lead to heart failure, whether it comes from drug or alcohol abuse, viral infection, a congenital heart defect or unknown causes.

Heart Defects Present at Birth (Congenital Cardiovascular Disease): Some people are born with hearts that don't form correctly as they develop. The defects can occur in the heart's chambers, valves or arteries.

Severe Lung Disease: Any condition that causes the lungs to function less efficiently also causes the heart to work harder.

Diabetes: This condition also puts additional strain on the heart's operation. People living with diabetes also tend to be overweight, have high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. They live with multiple risk factors, and therefore, increase their risk for heart disease.

Symptoms of Heart Failure:

- *Shortness of Breath--Breathlessness during activity or rest
- *Persistent coughing or wheezing--May be dry or produce a white or pink phlegm
- *Buildup of excess fluid in the body tissues (edema)--Swelling of feet, ankles, legs or abdomen
- *Tiredness, Fatigue--Constant lack of energy
- *Lack of appetite, Nausea--A sense of having a full or sick stomach
- *Increased Heart Rate--The heart seems to be racing or pounding
- *Irregular Heart Rhythm--The heart seems to be skipping beats or pounding very hard

Next month:

What is a Heart Attack and The Risk Factors for Coronary Heart Disease

**Blessings,
Sue Woodward, R.N.
Health Ministries**

Conley's United Methodist Church

November, 2008

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Part III of Understanding Your Heart

What is a Heart Attack and The Risk Factors for Coronary Heart Disease

A heart attack occurs when the blood supply to a part of the heart's muscle is severely reduced or stopped completely. This is typically caused by a blockage in at least one of the arteries feeding the heart. The blockage usually builds over time through a process called atherosclerosis, which is the buildup of fatty deposits, or plaque, inside the artery walls. If the plaque buildup ruptures, it can cause the muscle's cells to suffer permanent damage or die. The longer this period lasts, the more dangerous the heart attack becomes. It is always critical to call 9-1-1 and get emergency care immediately when the warning signs of a heart attack become apparent.

It is critical that anyone who witnesses a person experiencing this condition obtain immediate medical help. If the person is unresponsive, the rescuer should be able to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation (if available) to restore blood flow. **REMEMBER, CONLEY'S HEALTH MINISTRIES OFFERS BOTH CPR AND DEFIBRILLATION CLASSES AT NO COST TO YOU.** Please contact the church office at **945-1881** or **John Schmitt** at **644-0510** if you would like to take a class.

Symptoms of a Heart Attack:

- * Chest Discomfort--Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- * Discomfort in other areas of the upper body--Pain or pressure in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- * Shortness of Breath--Can occur with or without chest discomfort.
- * Other signs--Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

The Risk Factors of Coronary Heart Disease:

The American Heart Association has identified several risk factors. Some of them can be controlled, modified and treated, but some cannot. The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk for developing coronary artery disease.

Risk Factors that Can't be Changed:

- * Increasing Age: Over 83% of people who die from coronary heart disease are 65 or older.
- * Male
- * Heredity

Risk Factors that Can be Changed:

- * Tobacco Smoke
- * High Blood Cholesterol
- * High Blood Pressure
- * Physical Inactivity
- * Obesity and Overweight
- * Diabetes Mellitus

Contributing Factors:

- * Individual Response to Stress
- * Drinking too much Alcohol

Next month: Part IV of Understanding Your Heart Series. We will discuss Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD).

Blessings,
Sue Woodward R.N., HM