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THE HEART OF THINGS

In the field of cardiology, there are a few signs universally considered risk factors for cardiovascular disease after many years of research and practice. We know that smoking is harmful, high cholesterol and obesity are risk factors for major coronary artery disease, high blood pressure needs to be addressed, for a just a few examples.

Some symptoms, especially atypical symptoms, are experienced by women more commonly than men and take a more nuanced consideration.

Many of these symptoms and risk factors are typical and fairly common. For example, if a patient arrives at the hospital complaining of chest pain that feels like “an elephant sitting on my chest,” one would think immediately of the classic signs of heart attack (myocardial infarction). If a patient arrives with sudden numbness along one side of the body, a stroke may be indicated.

In many female patients, however, a heart attack may present in more subtle, uncommon ways. Atypical symptoms of a heart attack in women can include sudden, profuse sweating, an impending sense of doom, extreme fatigue or inability to sleep.

Women are more likely to develop heart disease later in life than men, but cardiovascular disease remains the number one killer of women in the United States.

Women can develop hypertension while pregnant, gestational diabetes or other disease factors due to hormonal and environmental changes throughout their lifetime. I cannot stress enough how crucial it is to a woman’s health to keep in close communication with your physician. Please make sure to have an annual exam – any risk factors can be minimized by early detection.

I suggest that everyone become extremely educated about their own health and the risk factors for heart disease. Smoking cessation, nutritional changes, limiting alcohol and caffeine consumption and regular exercise are always at the top of my list for all patients wanting to make changes.

The best way to change your life and prevent disease is to become more conscious of your health and your body. See what feels best to you; what works for you to balance, de-stress, exercise and eat. Your physician can help create a plan that works toward radiant health.

Medicine is a dynamic field and every day brings more technological breakthroughs, nutritional information and research that lead to better outcomes. Some patients can find the ongoing research confusing, but talking to your doctor and developing your body intuition can help patients navigate.

Another key aspect of health, especially for my female patients, is to keep connected to friends and family. We all need to connect and talk to someone and there's ample research to show that those who are actively relating to others and enjoying their day live longer with more satisfaction.

Listen to Dr. Galichia's Radio Show – "Take Your Health to Heart" every Saturday from 11 AM to Noon on 1480 KQAM in Wichita. If you have any medically related questions, please call us during the LIVE broadcast at 1-800-TALK-997 or 1-800-825-5997. You can also e-mail your questions anytime to **GalichiaRadio@Galichia.com**. We would love to hear from you!!!

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