SEX is bad for the heart.

On the contrary, sex is good for the heart.

The morphine-like opiates and other feel-good hormones our own body secretes during sex or during any happy activities or thought processes we have, the physical exercise during sex, and the healthy outlet it provides both partners, actually benefit the heart.

Only those with untreated coronary artery disease or heart failure could get into trouble during sex.

With proper treatment and medical guidance, these patients can indulge in sex safely.

Heart attack is a treacherous enemy.

It must be detected and treated before it strikes.
This is why medical consultation is important among men or women over 40 years old, or among the younger ones who have symptoms or concerns about their health.

**Heart disease is inherited.**

Rarely, certain congenital (inborn) structural defect of the heart may be genetic, but in general, we cannot blame our ancestry for the heart diseases that are very common today, like coronary artery disease (cause of heart attacks), or heart valve diseases (due to Rheumatic Fever).

Although some families seem to be more prone to heart attacks, and the traits could be a part of the genes, the important causative factors in this situation are mostly not heredity but environmental — the life style of the family members.

These significant etiologic factors include smoking, eating red meats, eggs and other high cholesterol foods, lack of exercise, obesity, unmanaged stress, hypercholesterolemia (elevated cholesterol blood level), untreated hypertension, diabetes mellitus (especially the poorly controlled ones).

**Children of heart attack victims will have the same fate.**

This is not true.

Even if both parents had heart attacks or coronary artery disease, their children are not necessarily condemned to same fate, provided the children live a healthier lifestyle, unlike their parents.

If these children stay on low cholesterol diet, eat fish (instead of red meat), a lot of vegetables, fruits, and high fiber foods, do not smoke, exercise for 30 minutes a day at least 5 times a week,
maintain a normal weight, know how to relax and manage stress, they can escape significant coronary artery disease.

**Women rarely have heart disease.**

Wrong.

As one of the old cigarette commercials stated “You’ve come a long way, Baby.”

Since today’s modern women have entered the “men’s world,” working, smoking, drinking, competing, hustling like men, they have indeed “come a long way,” approximating men in most respects, even in the incidence of coronary artery disease and heart attacks among them.

Young women as a rule have greater resistance to coronary artery disease because of the protective effects of the female sex hormone called estrogen.

However, women with unhealthy lifestyle negate the benefits of estrogen and suffer heart disease like men.

The 2 to 1 (male to female) vulnerability has been narrowing the past 3 decades.

**Executives are prime victims of heart attacks.**

Not so.

We used to believe that top job responsibility and stressful executive positions led to higher
incidence of heart attacks.

Recent studies have proven this to be a fallacy.

In a study, bartenders were found to be more vulnerable to heart attacks than barbers, and barbers more prone than physicians.

In another series, blue-collar workers were found to be more susceptible to heart attacks than supervisory personnel and executives.

It is obvious that lifestyle, and not the line of work, position or rank, is more of the determinant factor in heart attacks.

**Persons younger than 40 do not get heart disease.**

Another myth.

The youngest patient we did coronary bypass surgery on in Indiana, U.S.A., was a 28-year-old diabetic Caucasian female, who had very high cholesterol level, high blood pressure, and a cigarette smoker.

At Cebu Cardiovascular Center in Cebu City, the youngest heart bypass patient we had was a 34-year-old man.

Coronary artery disease does not respect any age, gender, or any person who abuses himself/herself with an unhealthy lifestyle.
Myths, facts about the human heart

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
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Exercise damages the heart.

Definitely does not.

The heart can take a lot more challenges than one can imagine.

It is one of the strongest muscular organs in the human body.

Exercise has beneficial effects on the heart.

Even heart attack patients who have recovered from the acute phase are prescribed an exercise regimen.

Exercise dilates (opens wider) coronary arteries that supply the heart muscles with oxygen and nutrition.

The benefits conferred by regular moderate exercise are “cumulative and lasting.”

If in doubt about your fitness to do exercises, consult your physician.

Heart attack victims should be sedentary.

Nothing is farther from the truth.
Heart attack patients who have recovered should resume normal activities as prescribed by their physicians.

It is most essential for these people to be active again as soon as they are medically allowed to.

A sedentary life for these patients would only lead to deterioration of the heart and to vegetation.

Those who bounce back to as normal a life as possible following a heart attack will fare much better physically and mentally than those who resign themselves to invalidism.

**Longevity is shortened by heart bypass.**

This is another myth. Coronary bypass surgery not only improves the quality of life by eliminating chest pains but also increases the life span of patients, whose life will otherwise be reduced by heart attack.

More and more clinical studies are showing this to be the case.

**Heart bypass patients are unable to work.**

Wrong.

One of the goals of coronary bypass surgery is to allow the patient to go back to the main stream of society.
After adequate recovery, patients who were working prior to surgery can usually go back to their original job, with some initial restrictions.

Very rarely are post-bypass patients unable to resume previous work activities.

These exceptions are among those with severe and neglected coronary artery disease where the heart muscles have already been damaged before the patients agreed to have bypass surgery.

**Red meats and eggs are good for children.**

A dangerous myth!

High cholesterol diet is bad for children as it is unhealthy for adults.

It has been shown on autopsies performed on children (victims of various accidents and illnesses) ages 4 to 6 that the inner walls of their arteries were already lined with a thin layer of cholesterol plaques (fatty deposits).

Therefore, it is clear that hardening of the arteries starts even earlier than that tender age.

Since red meats (like pork and beef and anything made of them) and eggs (particularly the yolk) are high in cholesterol, these foods are actually detrimental to children and to all of us.

Red meat is not essential to life; we can live — and be healthier — not eating red meat.
For a gift of health, please visit: philipSchua.com

E-mail address: scalpelpen@gmail.com