

HEARTHUB.CA “MYTHBUSTERS” PRINTOUT

Myth: I shouldn't ask questions in my doctor's office

This meeting is about *your* health. Ask your doctor questions so you understand about your health. You only have a set amount of time for your visit, so you should prepare your questions before going into the office.

Myth: My cholesterol is normal, I don't have heart disease/I don't need medication (why am I being prescribed this medication?)

Your doctor feels that you are at high risk for developing heart disease. He/she has placed you on this medication to help prevent heart disease from happening.

Myth: No, I don't have high blood pressure because my medication(s) keep it low

That's wonderful that the medication is working to keep your blood pressure low. However, if you stop taking it, and have not changed your lifestyle choices, your blood pressure will likely become high again.

Myth: I take X supplement (i.e. St. John's Wort), this will cure me

There is no research to that says supplements work against heart disease. Most supplements will not harm you. However, they will not cure you.

Myth: If I avoid a high fat/high sugar etc. diet, I will be fine

Avoiding a high fat/high sugar diet will help prevent heart disease. However, there are other causes of heart disease such as age, family history, high blood pressure, diabetes, and exercise level.

Myth: Diagnostic tests like a MIBI stress test will tell me what's wrong

Diagnostic tests give an indication of whether there is heart disease. They do not give a definite answer.

Myth: If there is a blockage, the arteries get “cleaned out”

The arteries are not cleaned out. Some of the blockages may be opened by balloons and stents so the blood will flow more easily. This does not cure all of the disease.

Myth: If I have a blockage, it can be fixed by PCI

Unfortunately, not all blockages can be fixed by a PCI. Depending on how many blockages you have, how tight the blockages are, and where the blockages are found in your arteries, your doctor(s) will decide if the blockage(s) can be fixed by a PCI.

Myth: This happened to my X (mother, brother, friend, etc...) therefore it will happen to me if I have the same test

Unfortunately there are risks to every procedure. However, the risks are very small. Each person is unique. Tell your doctor of your concerns.

Myth: I've been referred for surgery, it will happen next day/soon

When you have surgery will be decided by the physician. There is usually a wait period. How long you have to wait will depend on the severity of your heart disease. Stay in touch with your surgeon and let them know of any symptoms you are having.

Myth: The same doctor who performs my angiography will also perform my surgery

There are many specialists in cardiology. The doctor who performed the investigation is a cardiologist who specializes in

angiography. A cardiac surgeon performs the surgery. He/she has special training in surgery and they are not the same doctor.

Myth: I can undergo treatment by myself

It is always a good idea to bring someone with you to each appointment, and on the day of your treatment. It is recommended to have someone bring you home after your treatment, and someone to help you during your recovery.

Myth: I don't have heart disease anymore because I have a stent

Once you have heart disease, it stays with you for life. To stop current blockages from getting worse or new ones from forming, you will need to make some lifestyle changes and may need to take medication.

Myth: I was cured by my treatment – I won't need medication

The treatment is not a cure. In order to stop further blockages, you will likely need to take medication. If you stop taking your medication, the blockages and symptoms may return more quickly.

Myth: If I feel fine, I can go back to my life before treatment

If you feel fine, that's great. Unfortunately, your life before treatment contributed to your heart disease. If you return to this life, you may develop more heart disease. By taking your medication and following your doctor's suggestions, you will be able to help prevent further heart disease.