

*Sample Man continued...*

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### **Cigarettes and Tobacco**

Smoker's risk of CHD is twice as high as nonsmokers. The American Heart Association reports that chronic exposure to second hand smoke significantly increases risk of CHD. When people stop smoking, regardless of how long or how much they've smoked, their risk rapidly declines.

It's important to stop smoking before the signs of heart disease appear. Quit smoking NOW!

### **Cholesterol**

The risk of CHD increases as blood cholesterol levels increase. When other risk factors are present (high blood pressure or smoking), this risk increases even more. Many studies have shown that middle-aged adults with cholesterol below 200 mg/dl have a relatively low risk for CHD. Have your cholesterol and HDL measured at least every five years and consult with your physician if further tests should be done.

A cholesterol value of 240 mg/dl or higher doubles the risk of CHD.

### **Blood Pressure**

High blood pressure usually has no early warning signs and is often called the silent killer. Fortunately, a quick, simple and painless test can detect it. High blood pressure increases the work of the heart - resulting in an enlarged and weakened heart.

### **Physical Activity**

Physical inactivity or the lack of exercise increases the risk of CHD. A regular aerobic exercise program has been proven to play a significant role in reducing risk. Even modest levels of low-intensity physical activity are beneficial when they are done on a daily basis. Walking, gardening, housework and dancing are excellent forms of activity.

Middle-aged or older people who are inactive should seek medical advice before they start or significantly increase their physical activity.

### **Diabetes**

Diabetes is the inability of the body to produce or respond to insulin properly. Diabetes occurs most often in middle-aged and over weight people. A very high percentage of people with diabetes die of some form of heart disease. If you have diabetes, work with your physician to keep it in check.

### **Obesity**

Excess weight is unhealthy because it increases the strain on the heart. It is a CHD risk factor because its link to high cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes.

### **Stress**

It is difficult to define and measure an individual's emotional stress. Some studies have noted a link between CHD and a person's life stress.