



HEALTH MATTERS

Survey Shows Americans Are Not Taking Heart Disease Risk To Heart

(NAPSA)—According to a recent survey, Americans could be doing much more to prevent heart disease.

In fact, American adults may be overly optimistic about their risk of heart disease and too often give themselves an inflated report card for their current prevention efforts.

A Harris Interactive® survey of more than 2,000 adults revealed that while most people were aware of the dangers of unhealthy lifestyles and diets and that most believe they are trying to change their ways, other objective measures of Americans' actual behaviors do not confirm their personal assessment.


For example, only 59 percent of those surveyed believed that cardiovascular disease was the number one killer. Most people reported that they were taking steps to reduce their total cardiovascular risks, but there is evidence that the majority of the population is not.

"Despite repeated efforts made by physicians and public health officials to educate Americans about cardiovascular disease, obesity, and other risk factors, the majority still do not believe that they are at risk for developing heart disease," said past president of the American Heart Association, Robert Bonow, M.D. "As physicians, we must redouble our efforts to communicate to our patients the personal risks associated with the nation's number one health threat."

Many surveyed adults say they are at little or no risk of suffering a heart attack, stroke or diabetes in the next five years and are not at all concerned about cardiovascular conditions.

Fooling Themselves

Many Are Trying, Few Are Succeeding at Reducing Risk

I participate in these heart-healthy behaviors. I try to:	Surveyed adults "trying"	Surveyed adults "not trying"	Objective evidence
Maintain healthy weight	76%	24%	64% of Americans are overweight/obese.
Get regular exercise	68%	32%	Only 19% of Americans engage in a high level of physical activity.
Avoid foods high in fat	65%	35%	Only 10% of Americans eat a diet consistent with federal nutrition guidelines. 
Limit salt in my diet	61%	39%	
Avoid foods high in cholesterol	61%	39%	

American adults may be giving themselves better marks than they deserve when it comes to doing all they can to prevent heart disease.

- **Only one-third (32 percent)** of adults expressed concerns about angina/coronary heart disease/heart attack.

- **One-fifth (19 percent)** of adults said that they were at no risk at all of suffering a heart attack in the next five years.

- **An estimated one-half of people** over age 20 have high blood cholesterol, however only 31 percent of those surveyed had been told they had high cholesterol by a healthcare provider and only 30 percent of adults expressed any concern about it.

- **Also, one-quarter (26 percent)** of adults believe that thin people are healthier than overweight people.

Survey findings indicated that more than half (54 percent) of all adults think that cancer, not heart disease, is the leading cause of death among cigarette smokers. In addition, only half of adults and half (53 percent) of all women are aware that one in 10 women aged 45-64 has some form of heart disease.

A substantial percent of those surveyed are ignoring "heart-healthy" behaviors—even among populations with three out of three risk factors (hypertension, high cholesterol and family history of heart disease or stroke). For example, 35 percent of Americans, including 23 percent of those with three risk factors, do not try to avoid fatty foods.

More information can be found in the most recent issue of *The Pfizer Journal*® entitled "Heart Disease: An All-Out Attack on Risk," which can be read online at www.thepfizerjournal.com.

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