Listen to your heart for a long and healthy life

Singaporean culture values working hard. Since childhood, we have been trained to ignore our body’s signals to rest, eat and sleep, so as to continue studying, training, and working. Tiredness, hunger and sleepiness are ignored in favour of striving for achievement. There is truth in the saying ‘no pain, no gain’ but our body is designed to maintain a balance to keep it functioning well.

If some part of the body malfunctions or is injured, it will let us know through symptoms such as pain, breathlessness or fatigue. Many times we hear of the sudden deaths of people who seemed to be healthy. But we may never know what symptoms of illness they may have had and chose to ignore. They may have scheduled a check-up with their doctor, but that came too late. We should listen to our body when symptoms arise such as chest pains or chest discomfort, difficulty in breathing, fast heartbeat (palpitations) and leg swelling.

Cardiologist Dr Daniel Yeo of Apex Heart Clinic said that there are now many highly accurate and safe tests which can tell us whether there is any underlying disease that may lead to life-threatening conditions such as heart attack or stroke, which results from a blockage of one of the blood vessels supplying the heart muscle. Modern emergency medical technology can keep most people alive if they seek help immediately, but often the damage has already been done.

Dr Yeo adds: “The presence of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or a family history of heart attacks or strokes in close relatives such as parents, brothers or sisters, are all established risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease. The number of people with heart failure, is increasing worldwide, including Singapore, annually. A common reason for heart failure is suffering from a heart attack, which results from a blockage of one of the blood vessels supplying the heart muscle.”

“Cost may be an obstacle, but do not let that deter you from first having a conversation with your doctor, who can direct you to the best way to receive the care you need.”

Dr Daniel Yeo is a Heart Specialist (Cardiologist) at Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore. He was trained in Australia, Singapore and the United States of America. He was a Specialist at The Cleveland Clinic in the United States of America, which is voted the best heart hospital in America every year for the last 25 years. He is active in local and international research to improve treatment of heart disease. He specialises in treating heart attack (blocked blood vessels) and heart failure (weak heart), using evidence-based treatments to maximise the chances for recovery and to maintain good health.

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