Health: Heart Care Part 1
Chat with Dr. Devi Shetty, a renowned Heart Specialist (India)

1. **What are the thumb rules for a layman to take care of his heart?**
   a. Diet - Less of carbohydrate, more of protein, less oil
   b. Exercise - Half an hour’s walk, at least five days a week; avoid lifts and avoid sitting for a long time
   c. Quit smoking
   d. Control weight
   e. Control blood pressure and sugar

2. **It’s still a grave shock to hear that some apparently healthy person gets a cardiac arrest. How do we understand it in perspective?**
   This is called silent attack; that is why we recommend everyone past the age of 30 to undergo routine health checkups.

3. **Are heart diseases hereditary?** Yes

4. **What are the ways in which the heart is stressed? What practices do you suggest to de-stress?**
   Change your attitude towards life. Do not look for perfection in everything in life.

5. **Can people with low blood pressure suffer heart diseases?** Extremely rare

6. **Does cholesterol accumulates right from an early age (I’m currently only 22) or do you have to worry about it only after you are above 30 years of age?** Cholesterol accumulates from childhood.

7. **How do irregular eating habits affect the heart?** You tend to eat junk food when the habits are irregular and your body’s enzyme release for digestion gets confused.

8. **How can I control cholesterol content without using medicines?** Control diet, walk and eat walnut.

9. **Which is the best and worst food for the heart?** Fruits and vegetables are the best and the worst is oil/ghee

10. **What is the routine checkup one should go through? Is there any specific test?** Routine blood test to ensure sugar, cholesterol is ok. Check BP, Treadmill test after an echo.

11. **What are the first aid steps to be taken on a heart attack?** Help the person into a sleeping position, place an aspirin tablet under the tongue with a subitrate tablet if available, and rush him to a coronary care unit since the maximum casualty takes place within the first hour.

12. **How do you differentiate between pain caused by a heart attack and that caused due to gastric trouble?** Extremely difficult without ECG.

13. **What is the main cause of a steep increase in heart problems amongst youngsters? I see people of about 30-40 yrs of age having heart attacks and serious heart problems.** Increased awareness has increased incidents. Also, sedentary lifestyles, smoking, junk food, lack of exercise in a country where people are genetically three times more vulnerable for heart attacks than Europeans and Americans.

To be continue...