



HEART DISEASE RISK MAY SHOW IN YOUR EARLOBES, EYES, FINGERS

The heart, so integral to life, sits in its protective cage in the chest, going about its work without any external sign to the owner.

In the West, where one in four people die of cardiovascular disease, the importance of keeping the heart in good working order is hard to overstate. Sadly, the first sign many people have that their heart isn't in good working order is when they have a heart attack.

Although you can't see your heart beating in your chest -- not without specialist imaging

bumps themselves are harmless, but they can be a sign of bigger problems.

Xanthomas are most commonly seen in people with a genetic disease called familial hypercholesterolemia. People with this condition have exceptionally high levels of low-density lipoprotein cholesterol -- so-called "bad cholesterol". The levels of this cholesterol are so high they become deposited in the skin. Unfortunately, these fatty deposits are also laid down in arteries that supply the heart.

The mechanism that causes these fatty deposits in tissues is understood and it holds an

age of 40 have this fatty halo around their iris, rising to about 70% of people over the age of 60. The presence of this fatty ring has been shown to be associated with some of the risk factors for coronary heart disease.

How your community impacts your heart health
5. Rotten gums and loose teeth

The state of your oral health can also be a good predictor of the state of your cardiovascular health. The mouth is full of bacteria, both good and bad. The "bad" bacteria can enter the bloodstream from the mouth and cause inflam-



technology, at least -- there are visible, external signs that can indicate if something is wrong with your heart, before you suffer from a life-changing -- or ending -- "cardiovascular event".

1. Creased earlobes

One such external indicator is diagonal creases on the earlobes -- known as Frank's sign, named after Sanders Frank, an American doctor who first described the sign. Studies have shown that there is an association with the visible external crease on the earlobe and increased risk of atherosclerosis, a disease where plaque builds up inside your arteries.

Over 40 studies have demonstrated an association between this feature of the ear and an increased risk of atherosclerosis. It is not clear what the cause of the association is, but some have postulated that it is to do with a shared embryological origin. Most recently, it has been seen that these creases are also implicated in cerebrovascular disease -- disease of the blood vessels in the brain.

2. Fatty bumps

Another external indicator of heart issues is yellow, fatty bumps -- known clinically as "xanthomas" -- that can appear on the elbows, knees, buttocks or eyelids. The

iconic place in medicine as it led to the development of one of the blockbuster group of drugs that reduce cholesterol: statins.

3. Clubbed fingernails

A phenomenon known as digital clubbing may also be a sign that all is not well with your heart. This is where the fingernails change shape, becoming thicker and wider, due to more tissue being produced. The change is usually painless and happens on both hands.

10 best foods for your heart
The reason this change indicates heart issues is because oxygenated blood is not reaching the fingers properly and so the cells produce a "factor" that promotes growth to try and rectify the issue. Clubbing of the fingers is the oldest known medical symptom. It was first described by Hippocrates in the fifth-century BC. This is why clubbed fingers are sometimes known as Hippocratic fingers.

4. Halo around the iris
Fat deposits may also be seen in the eye, as a grey ring around the outside of the iris, the coloured part of the eye. This so-called "arcus senilis", starts at the top and bottom of the iris before progressing to form a complete ring. It doesn't interfere with vision.

About 45% of people over the

mation in the blood vessels, which can lead to cardiovascular disease.

Scientists turn to 3-D printing, digital simulations to treat heart disease

Studies have shown that tooth loss and inflamed gums (periodontitis) are markers of heart disease.

6. Blue lips
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Another health indicator from the mouth is the colour of your lips. The lips are usually red, but they can take on a bluish colour (cyanosis) in people with heart problems, due to the failure of the cardiovascular system to deliver oxygenated blood to tissues.

Of course, people also get blue lips if they are extremely cold or have been at a high altitude. In this case, blue lips are probably just due to a temporary lack of oxygen and will resolve quite quickly.

In fact, the other five symptoms -- mentioned above -- can also have a benign cause. But if you are worried or in doubt, you should contact your GP or other healthcare professional for an expert opinion.

MONTHLY RECIPES



"OLE-TIMER"

- 1/3 c. finely chopped onion
- 1/4 c. butter
- 2 c. sliced mushrooms - FRESH mushrooms
- 3 tsp. flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 c. Half and Half
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 2 tsp. Dijon-style prepared mustard
- 3/4 lb. fully cooked ham, diced
- 1/2 c. Madeira wine
- 1 c. Minute rice

Saute onion in butter until soft. Add mushrooms. Saute until mushrooms are limp. Blend in flour and salt. Add Half and Half, bouillon cube and mustard. Cook, stirring constantly, until sauce is thickened. Add ham and wine. Heat to serving temperature. Serve over cooked Minute Rice. Serves 4-6.

Cowboy Hot Dogs

- 1 - 16 ounce package Bar-S Bacon, chopped and cooked
- 8 - premium beef franks, turkey franks or smoked sausage links
- 8 - hot dog buns, toasted
- 2 - medium size yellow onions, sliced thin
- 1 - 16 ounce can can baked beans
- 1 - teaspoon honey
- 2 - tablespoon barbecue sauce
- 3 - tablespoons butter, separated
- 1 - tablespoon olive oil
- shredded Cheddar - jack cheese

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, saute the onion in olive oil and 2 tablespoons butter. Let the onions caramelize for about 20 minutes then set the onions aside.
2. In a separate large skillet, cook the bacon until crispy, drain the bacon grease. Remove some of the crumbled bacon to use as a topping.
3. Add the baked beans, honey and barbecue sauce to the remaining bacon and mix until combined. Simmer over medium heat until the beans are heated through.
4. Using an outdoor grill or grill pan, grill the hot dogs on all sides until heated through and hot dogs have visible grill marks.
5. Butter the hot dog buns lightly and toast the buns on the grill pan.
6. Assemble the hot dogs by adding one hot to a bun, then adding the baked beans, then caramelized onions, additional bacon and shredded cheese. Serve hot dogs while hot.

ROAST BEEF HASH

- 2 c. leftover roast beef, cut in sm. pieces
- 2 c. diced potatoes
- 1/2 c. chopped onions
- 1 pkg. dry onion soup mix

Combine meat, potatoes and onions in casserole. Sprinkle dry onion soup mix over top and add small amount of water. Bake in 350 degree oven for an hour.

Note: Can top with your choice of cheese, let stand until cheese is melted.

Hearty Navy Bean Soup

- 3 - (16 oz) cans Navy Beans (I prefer Bush's)
- 1 - (14.5 oz) can chopped stewed or diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 - small onion, chopped
- 1 - cup carrots, sliced
- 1 - clove garlic, minced
- 1 - meaty smoked ham hock, meaty ham bone or 2 cups diced cooked ham
- 2 - cups low sodium chicken broth
- 1 - cup water
- 1 - bay leaf
- 1/2 - tablespoon olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Drain and rinse beans and set aside. In a 6 quart slow cooker add the tomatoes with juice, ham hock, ham bone or ham, beans, broth, water, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Turn the crock pot to low
2. In a medium size skillet add a 1/2 tablespoon olive oil and heat the skillet until it's nice and hot. Add the carrots, onions and garlic. Saute' until the onions are translucent (about 5-7 minutes).
3. Add the vegetables to the crock pot. Cook on low for 4 hours. If using a ham hock or ham bone, remove and let stand until cool enough to hand.
4. Remove meat from bone; discard bone. Cut meat into bite-size pieces and add back to the crock pot and stir to mix. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Cook's Note: For a thicker soup remove one cup of beans, mash and return to the crock pot. You can also use instant potato flakes to thicken soups (1/4 - cup flakes), add more as needed. If using stewed tomatoes chop them up before adding. Also I like to start my slow cooker on "high" for the first hour and then reduce the temperature to low for the remaining cooking time.

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