



Heart Murmurs

March 2022

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Heart Murmurs is the newsletter of CASE published each year in February, March, April, May, September, October, November, and December. Suggested articles can be submitted to Barry Clark at kbclark1@telus.net Back issues of the newsletter are posted on the CASE website at: <http://www.edmontoncase.ca>

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please e-mail gbevans@telus.net with a subject line "unsubscribe".

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Support for CASE

As a recognized charitable institution, CASE makes a significant difference to people interested in maintaining their heart health. If you make a financial gift, either as a direct contribution, or in the memory of a member who has passed, we will issue a tax receipt.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING...SO SOON!

The 2021 Annual General Meeting for CASE is scheduled for 7:00 PM Monday, March 14, 2022, at SEESA. We know that it is only a few short months since the delayed 2020 AGM that was held in November. However, the AGM normally is held in March every year. Hopefully, as Covid 19 passes into memory, this meeting will provide opportunity to review the issues from the last year and look at what new opportunities we may find in 2022. Proof of vaccination and masking may be needed for entry to SEESA.

YOUR EXERCISING OPPORTUNITIES

For the last few months, CASE has been supporting two exercising programs. CASE Essentrics with Lynn has been supported by 17 members who work out with her, online,

two or three days a week. This has been a very popular program that has run for the last two years.

Our 'traditional' cardiac exercise program at Terwillegar restarted in January and provides a more heart focussed program of exercises. About 5 members are usually in attendance and have been enjoying this program. ***'Healthy at Heart'*** IS run by the City of Edmonton in support of CASE. As Covid has receded, it is hoped that more members will take part in these sessions held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:30 to 12:30.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO RESTART

CASE has provided a regular series of talks on Heart Health related topics in the spring and fall each year. These talks had to be discontinued during the pandemic, but we are now considering restarting these meetings. It takes time and effort to set up the sessions. The organizers would like some ideas as to topics of particular interest to members and whether members would feel comfortable attending these education sessions perhaps starting in May or September. If you would be interested in coming to sessions and/or have ideas as to useful topics or speakers, please contact Mae Hadley at maehadley@telus.net.

WATCH YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE!

Over-the-counter drugs can boost blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, take care when choosing products for treating cold and flu symptoms or pain. Many people head to pharmacies looking for products to ease their sniffles and aches. Remedies for cold, allergy, and sinus problems are the most frequently purchased category of over-the-counter drugs in this country. Pain relievers such as ibuprofen and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are also very popular and frequently are found in combination cold and flu medicines. However, some of these products may be risky for people with high blood pressure. Here's some guidance about what to avoid and suggestions for safer alternatives.

Clearing a stuffy nose: "The most concerning products are those that contain decongestants, because they constrict or narrow blood vessels, which can raise blood pressure," says Joanne Doyle Petrongolo, a pharmacist at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital. When you have a cold, your body sends extra blood to your nose. The blood vessels and nearby tissues swell, causing congestion or a stuffy nose. But if you take a decongestant, it affects all your blood vessels, not just those in your nose. That's why it's safest to avoid products that contain oxymetazoline (Afrin), pseudoephedrine (Sudafed), and phenylephrine (Suphedrin PE).

However, you can't simply avoid those brand names, as many dozens of other products include those decongestants in their ingredient lists. Many are combination products that

contain one or more additional drugs to treat a fever, cough, or sore throat, for example. When you include generic and store brands (which differ among pharmacy chains), there are an overwhelming number of choices. Rather than scrutinizing every label, it is advisable to ask a pharmacist to recommend a product that contains no decongestants and is safe for people with high blood pressure.

Some people find that antihistamines which relieve symptoms such as a runny nose, watery eyes, and sneezing can ease some cold and flu symptoms. Examples include chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton) and diphenhydramine (Benadryl). While they don't affect blood pressure, older people should be very cautious when taking these medications, since they can cause drowsiness and blurry vision, which increases the risk of falls.

Relieving aches and pains: People with high blood pressure should also try to minimize their use of NSAIDs, which include ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen sodium (Aleve, Naprosyn). These drugs, which are metabolized by the kidneys, encourage the body to hold on to salt and water. The resulting extra fluid in the body can raise blood pressure. NSAIDs can also damage blood vessels, causing cardiovascular problems.

Taking NSAIDs for the occasional headache or strained muscle isn't typically a problem. However, some people with aches and pains take them on a routine basis, sometimes more out of habit more than necessity. "If you have pain that's bad enough that you feel the need to take ibuprofen for more than a few days, see your doctor," says Petrongolo. He or she can assess whether you need a prescription-strength pain reliever, she adds, noting that uncontrolled pain can also boost blood pressure.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be a good alternative, although it doesn't have the inflammation-quelling properties of NSAIDs. For people with joint pain from arthritis, another option is diclofenac topical gel (Voltaren Arthritis Pain). Available by prescription in pill form, diclofenac is an NSAID. But the over-the-counter gel formulation is thought to be safer than taking a pill because lower levels of the drug end up in the bloodstream.

Source: [Julie Corliss](https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/over-the-counter-drugs-that-can-boost-blood-pressure), Executive Editor, *Harvard Heart Letter* Heart Health December 1, 2021
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/over-the-counter-drugs-that-can-boost-blood-pressure>

STIMULANTS MAY AFFECT YOUR HEART

Prescriptions for stimulants have risen sharply over the past two decades. Commonly used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children, these drugs include amphetamines (Adderall, Adzenys) and methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta). But increasingly, stimulants are being prescribed to older adults to combat conditions such as severe drowsiness, appetite loss and depression. New research suggests they may cause a

short-term spike in the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and heart rhythm disorders (arrhythmias).

The findings make sense, since stimulants cause the heart to beat faster and with greater force, both of which can raise blood pressure, says Dr. Pieter Cohen, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and an internist at Harvard-affiliated Cambridge Health Alliance. "These well-known side effects may be more worrisome in older people, who are more vulnerable to heart problems than younger people are," he says.

Serious heart problems? The study, published Oct. 25, 2021, in *JAMA Network Open*, included more than 6,400 people ages 66 and older who started a stimulant prescription between 2017 and 2019. Researchers then compared each of them with four adults similar in age and health status who weren't taking a stimulant. On average, stimulant users were 40% more likely to end up in the emergency room or hospital with a serious heart complication within 30 days of starting the drug.

The bottom line: If you are over 65, and especially if you have high blood pressure or other risk factors for heart disease, think twice before taking a prescription stimulant, he recommends even though, as prescription drugs these will have undergone a robust approval process. However, that is not the case with dietary supplements. It's fine to take a supplement if you're trying to rep. ish a specific vitamin or mineral, says Dr. Cohen. "But I would definitely stay away from any supplement that promises a near-term health benefit such as weight loss, muscle building, or memory enhancement," he says.

Source: [Julie Corliss](#), Executive Editor, [Harvard Heart Letter](#) Heart Health .February 1, 2022
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/how-stimulants-may-affect-your-heart>

CASE Events Calendar - March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	2 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	3 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	4	5
6	7 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	8 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	9 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	10 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	11	12
13	14 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00 CASE AGM 7 pm SEESA	15 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	16 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	17 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	18	19
20	21 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	22 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	23 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	24 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	25	26
27	28 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00 Board Meeting	29 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45	30 CASE Essentrics Online 11:00	31 Healthy at Heart TFRC 11:30 to 12:45		

Note: Watch email for more detail on activities and events.