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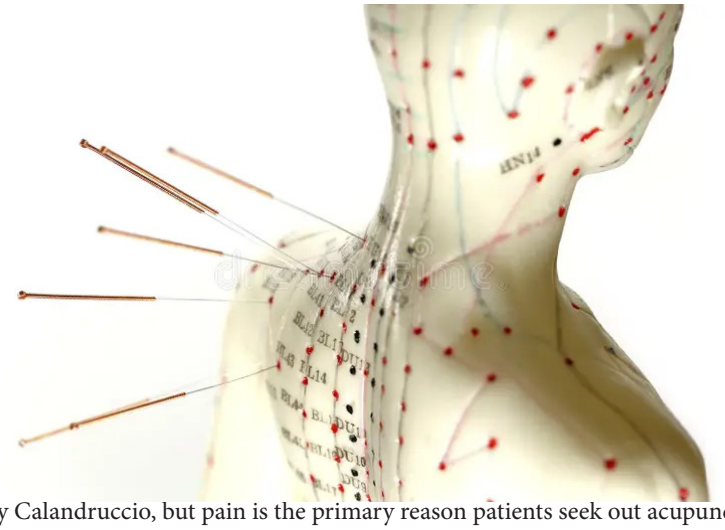
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Holistic Healing Growing In Popularity For Pain, Stress

By Margaret Radman
Freelance Writer



Holistic healing modalities are gaining renewed attention at the Middlesex Health Center for Integrative Medicine, where practitioners are using acupuncture alongside conventional treatments to help patients manage pain, stress, and chronic conditions.

Acupuncture treatment at the center began as a way to help relieve chemotherapy side effects that is provided free of charge to Middlesex Health patients, alongside other complementary therapies such as reflexology and massage.

With continued adoption, the integrative medicine division at Middlesex Health has expanded with its own office upstairs from the Cancer Center.

"A lot of people get relief from stress, anxiety, and depression," explained licensed acupuncturist Amy Calandruccio, but pain is the primary reason patients seek out acupuncture treatment, she said.

"It's one of the things acupuncture always works for, that provides quick results, usually with just three treatments," she added.

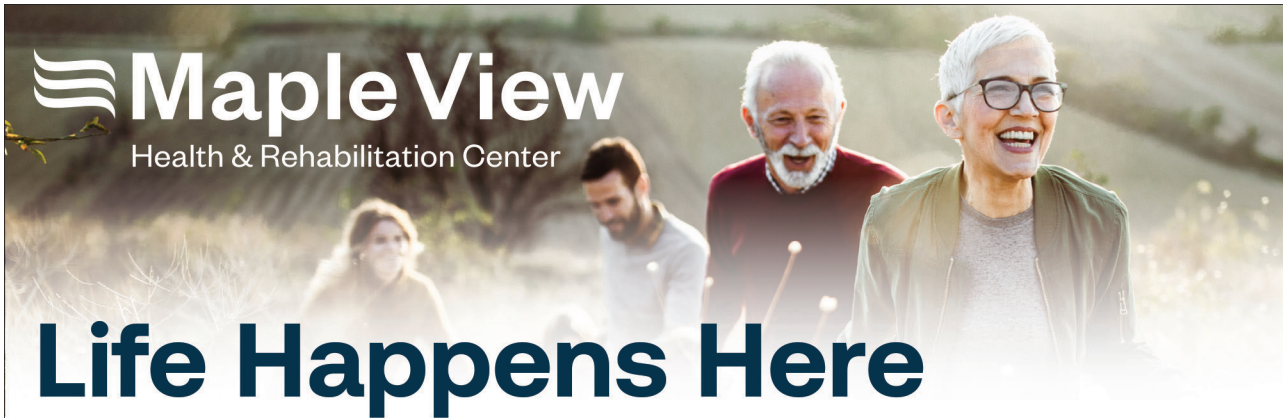
In addition to promising results in treating generalized pain, neuropathy, headaches, and nausea, acupuncture has also shown success in treating a condition termed Long Haul Covid, a residual loss of taste and smell in patients who have been infected with the virus.

"We have great success with this," said Calandruccio, confirming that the data bears out acupuncture's effectiveness in treating these conditions, otherwise known as anosmia (loss of smell) and ageusia, (loss of taste).

Acupuncture - that has its roots in China - is not new to all regions of the world, with the practice dating back some 2500 years in Eastern Asia. But it has become popularized more recently in America as the western world is finding that it works with the nervous system.

"Research shows acupuncture works with the nervous system," that can also help with stress and anxiety, confirmed Calandruccio.

Continues on page 6...



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The Story Behind Middletown's Award-Winning Vegan Restaurant

By Margaret Radman
Freelance Writer



For wholesome goodness and welcoming hospitality, consider enjoying a healthful meal at ION It's Only Natural Restaurant in Middletown, a vegetarian enclave that has been satisfying appetites for over 40 years.

Consistently voted Connecticut's Best Vegan Restaurant in the Hartford Advocate Readers' Poll, ION offers a standout menu and unparalleled atmosphere sure to please all.

Bask in the homey ambiance of filtered sunlight, climbing foliage, and vintage décor, or settle into a retro upholstered sofa where the relaxed setting mirrors the restaurant's eclectic vegan menu.

Southern fried tofu with lemon aioli, black beans and sauteed garlic, signature nachos; a burrito bowl, buffalo garlic parmesan tofu , or a classic vegan burger on a bun with aioli, onion, tomato, pickle and cheddar, are just a sampling of some of the vegetarian specialties offered at ION that are entirely free of animal protein, eggs, or dairy.

Consider Sunday brunch featuring pancakes served with maple syrup and "bacon," a breakfast burrito: scrambled tofu, salsa & cheese in a spinach herb wrap, or a breakfast bowl.

"I'm vegan for the animals," declared restaurant owner Renana Magee, when asked what her inspiration was to open the vegan establishment. She has been a vegetarian for most of her 58 years.

The restaurateur explained the distinctions between vegan, often based on ethical choices that avoids all animal products including eggs and dairy, plant based, that is meatless only, and pescatarians who include fish in their diet.

While respecting each individual's food choices, it is the inhumane practices of large-scale industrial agriculture - a practice known for confining large numbers of livestock in crowded spaces to maximize profit - that Magee said she finds most objectionable.

"I wouldn't want to hunt unless I had to, but it's the mass cruelty in factory farms I'm against," Magee said. "That's what I would like to see end in my lifetime or as soon as possible."

Magee said she has also found inspiration in the cookbook entitled Woman Warrior by Jane and Ann Crile Esselstyn that features 125 wholesome, plant-based, and oil free recipes.

Continues on next page...



The Story Behind Middletown's Award-Winning Vegan Restaurant

...Continued from previous page

"They don't use any oil that - along with a vegan diet - she attributes to a reduction or reversal in disease processes.

Magee touts the many benefits of being vegetarian, not the least of which are environmental. Antibiotics and hormones used in large scale farming operations are not only consumed by meat eaters but are also present in the environment as runoff along with fertilizers and pesticides that make their way into water supplies, air, and soil.

Likewise, large scale livestock farming contributes to deforestation, harmful methane gas production, and generalized pollution.

Magee went on to defend tofu, a common ingredient in vegetarian dishes, , that has been a subject of some controversy. Tofu gets a bad rap, she said, a concept that likely stems from the nonorganic varieties of soybean crops that are treated with potentially harmful agricultural chemicals.

Furthermore, scientific theories claiming that isoflavones – a type of plant estrogen in soy products – are harmful, have largely been debunked by more recent research.

According to a study from the American Society for Nutrition from April of 2025, evidence shows that isoflavones reduce estrogen-sensitive cancers and improves bone health and memory, while offering heart health benefits for all.

"It isn't warranted," she said, adding that nutrition is a small part of many doctors' education, sometimes amounting to only one semester of study.

The tofu used in the restaurant is fully organic, free of harmful chemicals and locally sourced from The Bridge, a manufacturer of high-quality tofu, seitan, and meatless salads.

Soybean-based protein offers many benefits as a heart healthy low fat, and nutrient rich food. By all accounts, tofu – when enjoyed as part of a balanced , and varied diet - is a highly safe and beneficial food choice.

Ion is open for dine-in, take-out, or for catering. Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sun 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Holistic Healing Growing In Popularity For Pain, Stress

...Continued from page 2

The procedure itself is not painful and with very limited side effects, Calandruccio said. The needles are very thin and inserted at vital points or meridians to unblock and regulate the free flow of "Qi," a vital energy that parallels the nervous system in western medicine.

"They are different words for the same thing," she added.

There is clear evidence that the practice is becoming more widely accepted, with emerging data that strengthens the case for acupuncture.

"One of the great things about being at Middlesex is the access to the statistician and the people that really focus on the studies," she said.

As more data emerges demonstrating the benefits of acupuncture, more doctors are referring patients for treatment.

"We get referrals from a lot of doctors' offices – GI specialists, neurologists, every kind of doctor, both within and outside of the Middlesex network and from other patients as well," Calandruccio remarked.

Middlesex Health is " pretty forward thinking," she said. In addition to acupuncture, the center offers treatment with massage, music therapy, reflexology, and reiki, with other nontraditional modalities on the horizon.

"Hopefully, we'll do more," she added.

With the exception of Aetna insurance, patients should expect out of pocket expenses. The treatment is free to Middlesex Health Cancer Center patients.

For further details, visit https://middlesexhealth.org/integrative-medicine

Healthy Food For A Healthy You

By Cailen Fienemann
Freelance Writer

Building healthy habits can be an overwhelming goal, encompassing everything from physical activity to sleep schedules and daily water intake. Nutrition and food choices are one of the biggest and most important parts of creating a healthier lifestyle – for many, working towards the goal of improving nutritional habits means repairing their relationship with food and digging into the root reasons for their current lifestyle.

Thankfully, there are many professionals ready and willing to tackle such heavy topics in a personalized and supportive environment. These businesses meet customers where they are at and work to build a stable foundation for enduring and sustainable changes. Many take a holistic approach to the nutritional journey, with services including not just nutritional support but personal training, chiropractic care, and other offerings.

Inspire Health and Wellness in Middletown specializes in aiding patients with IBD in creating a diet that helps mitigate their symptoms, along with providing more general nutrition therapy for those with other conditions or just looking to change their dietary habits. Dannielle Jascot, the owner of the establishment, has ten years of experience under her belt, and, as her website details, a passion that "lies in helping individuals achieve optimal health through understanding and implementing proper nutrition."

Also in Middletown is Mackie Coaching, a business that combines personal physical training with nutrition coaching. Will Mackie, the founder, prides himself on his flexibility and versatility, according to his website. With experience working with a wide range of ages, ability levels, and overall fitness goals. By customizing plans to each client's preferences and keeping programs engaging and sustainable, Mackie encourages growth that will last, aiming "to empower and guide clients to experience a healthier and more fulfilling life at any age."

Battleground Nutrition in Cromwell takes a slightly different approach, separating its training and health coaching programs from their store, which sells various nutritional supplements and products. Founded in 2013, Battleground Nutrition continues to stay at the forefront of the industry, keeping track of the latest developments in the nutrition industry. By addressing each individual customer's needs and recommending different supplements and changes based on their concerns, Battleground creates a space for sports and fitness enthusiasts to find exactly what they need.

While not the main focus of their business, one of Trilogy Health & Performance's offerings is nutritional support. Located in Rocky Hill, Trilogy's foundation in the industry is chiropractic services, though they provide a wide range of services that include rehab, functional medicine, and neurology, to name a few. With a goal of treating the whole patient and providing comprehensive care, Trilogy is connected with other health service providers in Rocky Hill, according to their website.



In Newington, World of Nutrition is the longest-running shop on the list, with 51 years of experience under their belt, according to their website. Shopowners Tabitha and Janet make it a mission to center their business around education and community connection. Their familiarity with their customer base and their focus on making the space feel like home allow them to connect more meaningfully with the local community. The "blog" tab on their website details vivid and emotional testimonials of people coming to their shop with various maladies who have found answers and relief through World of Nutrition.

Significant change starts with positive, small steps. Progress does not happen all at once, and results aren't visible or tangible in a day. Thankfully, the listed businesses include dozens of trained professionals who are willing to take that journey along with you, one step at a time.

NOBLE CARE

Adult Day Center

The Power of Connection: How Noble Care Enriches the Lives of Seniors

With the world changing faster than ever, staying socially connected is also more important than ever—especially for seniors. A meaningful everyday life includes pleasant interactions, engaging activities, and a strong sense of community, all of which contribute immensely to an elevated well-being. But for many older adults, finding such opportunities can often be challenging. This is a problem that the Noble Care Adult Day Center seeks to remedy, as it offers a welcoming and supportive environment that brings joy, companionship, and purpose to seniors, specifically those with physical or mental impairments, in Rocky Hill, CT.

With the risk of becoming a 'shut in' at an all time high for seniors, modern research has illuminated the need for social engagement as well as its role in maintaining cognitive function and physical health. Staying connected helps to improve memory, reduce stress, and promote a positive outlook on life. Like people of all ages, seniors who regularly interact with others are often happier and more fulfilled. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic had a tremendous impact on seniors and their ability to foster good social habits. Given that seniors in general were placed in a high risk category during the pandemic, it is no surprise some, even to this day, have regressed into a pattern of isolation. This makes it particularly important to rebuild and strengthen senior social networks in ways that are safe and enjoyable.

With the goal of creating a social center away from home, Noble care was founded to ensure that seniors have an outlet for their social needs and to avoid becoming a 'shut in.' The center, affectionately known as 'the club' by its attendees, provides a vibrant setting where seniors, many of whom have dementia, can participate in enriching activities while their caregivers are not available or take a much needed break.

Unlike traditional senior centers, Noble Care offers structured programs designed to promote engagement and belonging. Because approximately 80 percent of people with dementia suffer from depression, Noble Care is keen on cultivating a lively community in order to ensure its seniors' continued happiness. From creative arts and interactive games to guest presentations and group discussions, every aspect of the program is tailored to inspire joy and connection.

While seniors at Noble Care receive daily mental and sensory stimulation, they also have the opportunity to partake in physical activity. By allotting a total of 75 minutes a day towards stretching, chair exercises, and other physical tasks, Noble Care ensures that seniors are constantly engaging their mind and body.

To know that loved ones are at a place where they can form meaningful connections with others brings peace of mind to the many families currently utilizing Noble Care. Of the many 5 star
reviews left about Noble Care's compassionate and necessary service, one stands out stating "Noble Care is a life saver! Mom enjoys her day there and I get to go to work knowing that she is safe and surrounded by friends and friendly supportive staff. She is doing fun things and always is smiling when I come to pick her up". Seniors at the center aren't just participants at Noble Care, they are valued members of a caring community. The friendships, laughter, and memories shared, all enable a fulfilling and enriched life which otherwise wouldn't be possible for someone isolated in their home.

LW26

Injury Recovery With Rehabilitation Centers

By Cailen Fienemann
Freelance Writer

Accidents and injuries at any age can be devastating, with potentially life-long consequences that affect daily life. Especially in older adults, falling is a serious threat that could cause irreparable injury. Thankfully, rehabilitation centers in the local area have professionals and care plans that help people reclaim as much mobility as possible.

Bel-Air Mansion in Newington has plans for short-term and long-term care, with the goal of helping patients get back on their feet and in their community as soon as possible. Their family-owned practice is renowned for their dedication to providing excellent care, with their website boasting their five-star rating from the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services. Recovery plans are centered on each individual patient's recovery goals, with a variety of therapy and rehabilitation services that cater to those needs.

For 60 West in Rocky Hill, rehabilitation services are only a part of the equation. Their rehab programs include physical, cognitive, and language therapy, with staff on site seven days a week to ensure that all residents receive the therapy they need. However, the point that makes them unique is their specialty in caring for those who are difficult to place in traditional nursing homes and those who may be transitioning in their care needs, according to their website. It can be all too easy to fall through the cracks of the healthcare system – 60 West, as a part of iCare Health Network's MissionCare Health Service line and in collaboration with their partners from the State, works to aid those who do not fit perfectly in the system.

Also in Rocky Hill is Maple View, a rehabilitation center focused on maintaining patient dignity and providing compassionate care. Their aim, according to their website, is to provide not just physical care but emotional comfort and support as well. What makes them stand out from other local rehab centers is their extensive network of care providers and post-rehabilitation options. They provide a variety of plans for residents to ensure that patients are matched with a provider that can best offer support and guidance through the journey of recovery, as well as programs that extend that care even after the resident has returned home.

Middletown also has a few rehabilitation centers, including Wadsworth Glen. Established in 1984, Wadsworth Glen offers various services, which include hospice and end-of-life care, dementia care, and long- and short-term rehabilitative care. They also have options for home care, which allows patients to remain in their own homes while receiving the same kind of care that a rehabilitation center provides.

Apple Rehab, also in Middletown, has been in business for over 50 years, established by a nurse named Isabelle. Though they have expanded to multiple locations across Connecticut and Rhode Island, some of Isabelle's children and grandchildren run the rehab centers and continue her legacy. Per their website, they aim to treat staff and residents alike as part of the family, with personalized programs and dedicated providers to ensure that every resident gets the care they need.



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Finding Care And Community For Loved Ones

By Cailen Fienemann
Freelance Writer

Finding suitable care for an elderly loved one can be difficult – between astronomical prices and an overwhelming amount of care options, reaching the best solution for everyone involved can seem like a Herculean task. Thankfully, there are a number of local service providers that can help the process run smoother and offer the necessary support.

Covenant Living in Cromwell provides a spectrum of care options, ranging from residential living to rehabilitation and everything in between, even including an option for temporary respite care to ease some of the burdens of caregivers. Located in the residential area of Cromwell but minutes away from Hartford, there are plenty of opportunities for residents to take outings to the city while still getting a taste of nature on campus.

In Rocky Hill, the Holiday Lodge at Cold Spring is more of a senior community, providing independent living with all-inclusive amenities. With newly renovated apartments and spaces for recreational activities (such as fitness and computer rooms), there is no shortage of ways to learn new hobbies and foster a rich social life.

Middletown has an abundance of options for senior care, including Benchmark Assisted Living. Founded in 1997, Benchmark has multiple locations across the Northeast, and is "the largest provider of mind and memory care in New England and has been at the forefront of this specialty throughout its history" according to its website. Purporting to keep its residents and their families at the center of their mission, Benchmark works to provide the best of care and meet every patient where they are. A personalized care plan is created for each resident, tailored to their individual and unique needs and personality.

Also in Middletown is Luther Ridge, which has a unique option that merges independent and assisted living into "congregate living." This plan allows residents to live as independently as they want or can while also getting assistance and accommodations for whatever tasks they are unable to do or have trouble with. Such a unique and personalized plan broadens the spectrum of care and allows for people who don't quite fit fully independent or fully assisted plans to find a place that suits their needs.



And, if moving into a new place feels too overwhelming, Home Instead in Middletown offers programs for caregivers to visit patients at home, assisting with non-medical daily tasks. This allows aging adults to remain in their home while providing care that eases the burden of daily chores and tasks.

Aging is a scary process – it can be hard to face the reality of losing independence and potentially having to move to a care facility. With so many local options that have personalized plans and a wide range of services, professionals can help ease the burden. Whether one needs fully assisted care or simply a caregiver who can help out in the home, there are plans available to fit any need.





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Great Workouts on Days When a Trip to the Gym Isn't Feasible

The right workout routine can make a world of difference in a person's life. When people like their fitness regimens, they're more likely to commit to routine exercise, which can help reduce their risk for chronic diseases, make them less vulnerable to injury and improve their mental health.



No two people are the same, so a workout regimen that's enjoyable and effective for one person will not necessarily appeal to another individual. Some people have no qualms about exercising in a gym, where strength-training machines and cardiovascular equipment facilitate full-body workouts that promote healthy minds and bodies. But others find gyms intimidating or can't fit daily gym excursions into their schedules. Others may find working out in the same facility each day a little boring. That's why it can be beneficial to find alternative means to exercising on those days when a trip to the gym isn't feasible or appealing.

· Take to the trails. The great outdoors can be a gym unto itself. Various outdoor activities can build strength and promote cardiovascular health. Hiking is one such activity. According to Harvard Medical School, the uneven terrain hikers encounter on trails requires more energy to traverse, which in turn burns more calories than walking on level surfaces.

· Commit to interval training. Interval training has long been recommended to busy adults with hectic schedules. Interval training is exercise that involves periodic short bursts of intense physical activity followed by periods of rest or low-intensity activity. Interval training sessions tend to be shorter than moderate-intensity continuous training (MICT), but the periodic bursts of intense physical activity make interval training sessions highly effective workouts. In fact, a 2021 study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that interval training provides similar health and performance benefits as MICT. Challenging hikes can mimic the effects of interval training, as can additional activities such as jumping rope, cycling and swimming that do not necessarily need to be performed at a gym.

· Embrace your inner yogi. Yoga is another physical activity tailor-made for busy adults who don't have time to get to the gym each day. The characterization of yoga as a niche activity is no longer applicable, as participation among males in the United States alone grew from four million in 2012 to 14 million in 2022, according to Yogkulam.org. Though global participation figures are hard to determine, market projections estimating the valuation of the yoga industry at $215 billion in 2025 are a testament to the popularity of this activity, which Johns Hopkins Medicine credits with improving strength, balance and flexibility. Yoga also has become increasingly accessible since the pandemic, as Yogkulam.org notes 40 percent of yoga practitioners prefer virtual classes available through platforms such as YouTube that can be streamed from the comforts of home.





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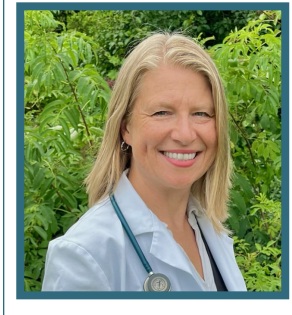
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Cherries Offer Some Sweet Perks



Eating healthy, diverse food offerings is a step in the right direction for overall wellness. Foods rich in essential vitamins and minerals should be front and center in most people's diets, and one particular fruit is quite literally the cherry on top when it comes to nutritional value.

Cherries, which are small stone fruits (fruits that have a pit or seed inside), boast some impressive benefits. Michigan grows most of the sour cherries in the United States, while Washington, California and Oregon grow 90 percent of the sweet cherries. Whether they're tart or sweet, the nutritional benefits of cherries abound. Here's a look at some of the health benefits.

· High in antioxidants: Cherries are high in plant chemicals (polyphenols and anthocyanins) that have antioxidant properties. The Cleveland Clinic says antioxidants fight free radicals, which can cause cell damage and contribute to chronic diseases. Cherries contain vitamins A, C and E.

· Reduce inflammation: These same plant chemicals also are vital in reducing inflammation throughout the body. Healthline says cherries can reduce inflammation by blocking inflammatory enzymes and lowering inflammatory markers. This is good news for people with arthritis or gout, who may find that consuming cherries or drinking cherry juice can alleviate symptoms.

· Promote restful sleep: Tart cherries contain key compounds that support better sleep, says WebMD. These include melatonin, serotonin and tryptophan. These natural chemicals help promote relaxation and sleep-wake cycles.

· Low glycemic index: Cherries are low-glycemic index foods. The fiber from the skin facilitates a slow increase in blood sugar, which makes cherries a treat for those with diabetes when enjoyed in moderation. Research is underway to see if a healthy diet that includes cherries may reverse prediabetes, says the Cleveland Clinic.

It's always best to thoroughly wash cherries to remove any dirt and pesticide residue. WebMD says cherry pits naturally have small amounts of cyanide in them. One would have to eat a lot of crushed pits for them to be harmful, but it's best to spit out the pits. Pits should be removed before giving cherries to children. Select cherries that have bright green stems, plump fruit and a darker color, which have a better flavor profile.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease



One of the more significant hurdles to beating heart disease is raising awareness of its risk factors among the billions of people across the globe who have at least one of those factors, even if they don't know it. According to the NHLBI, the following are some notable risk factors for heart disease.

· Age: Heart disease risk increases with age, but anyone can develop it. For men, risk increases significantly around age 45, while women's risk increases more rapidly around age 55.

· Environmental/work conditions: Indoor or outdoor air pollution increases risk for heart disease. The NHLBI notes that air pollution may cause or worsen conditions like high blood pressure or inflammation, which are known risk factors for heart disease. Long and/or irregular working hours (55 hours or more per week); exposure to toxins, radiation, secondhand smoke, or other hazards; work-related stress; and sedentary positions throughout a workday are some work conditions associated with an elevated risk for heart disease.

· Family history/genetics: A father or brother diagnosed with heart disease prior to age 55, or a mother or sister diagnosed before age 65, is a risk factor for heart disease. The NHLBI also notes research has found that some genes are linked to a higher risk of heart disease.

· Lifestyle habits: Unhealthy lifestyle habits that increase heart disease risk include a sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol consumption, insufficient sleep over a prolonged period of time, smoking, and poor diet.

These are some heart disease risks that people should be aware of as they seek to improve their overall health. More information about ischaemic heart disease can be found at nhlbi.nih.gov.

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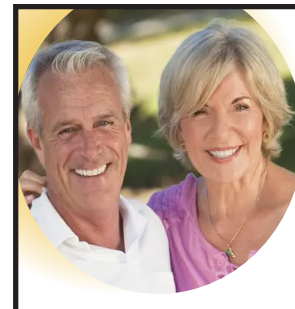
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