



Heart Health: Be Happy!

Want a healthy heart? Be happy! Heart patients with a positive attitude are more likely than those with a dim view of recovery to be healthier down the road and to survive longer, according to a new study.

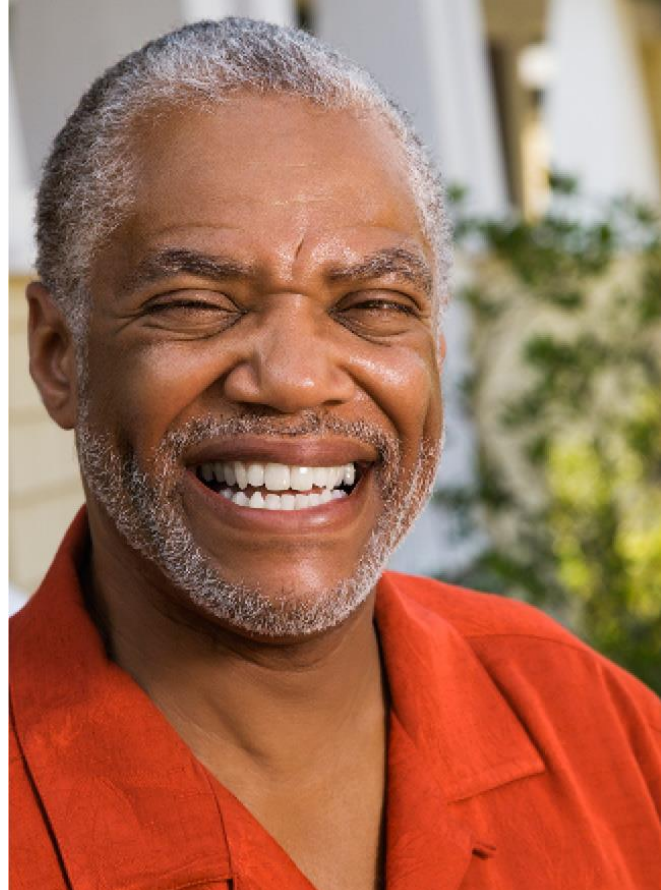
Researchers at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C., followed 2,800 people who had been hospitalized with heart disease. Their findings, published in the journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*: those optimistic about their recovery had about a 30 percent greater chance of survival after 15 years than the pessimistic patients.

For the study, researchers asked heart patients when diagnosed how they felt their condition would affect their lifestyle and if they thought they would ever return to normal activities. The scientists followed the patients for 15 years. Those with the most upbeat attitudes at the outset had the best longevity even after controlling for risk factors like age, gender, disease severity and income.

Researchers aren't certain why the optimists fared better. They speculate this group was better at coping with their illness and were less likely to give up or worry if obstacles cropped up. (Chronic stress can have damaging effects on the body.) They may also be more likely to take positive steps, like closely following treatment plans and exercising to get back on their feet, according to the study.

"This study is unique because it shows that a patient's attitude toward their disease not only impacts their ability to return to a normal lifestyle, but also their health over the long term and ultimately their survival," lead study author John Barefoot said in a news release. "The take-home message is that having positive expectations can not only make you feel better but also potentially live longer."

So chin up. Your heart may depend on it!



The Condition Management program can help you combat heart disease. When you enroll in this confidential program, you'll receive unlimited access to an experienced nurse who will work with you one-on-one. As part of your support team, your nurse will:

- Help you prepare for doctor visits so you can make the most of your time with your physician
- Work with you to reach your health goals like reducing stress
- Provide help navigating the complex healthcare system so you can

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SOURCE:

Duke University: http://www.dukehealth.org/health_library/news/you-ve-gotta-have-heart-positive-outlook-increases-heart-patient-s-survival?utm_source=dukehealth.org&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=RSS_news

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