Stress Is Destroying Your Arteries Right Now Transcript

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Stress and Heart Disease Overview

You can have decent cholesterol. You could have OK blood sugar. you can even be trying to eat better and stress can still quietly damage your heart. Now, I'm talking about the kind of stress that doesn't always show up clearly on your lab work, but can steal raise your blood pressure, can tighten the blood vessels and even trigger a heart attack from the cath lab.

I can tell you this. Some people are not just breaking down from what they eat. They're breaking. Down from. What they're carrying. And today I want to show you the connection between stress and heart disease.

and the top foods that can help lower the stress burden on your body. I'm Dr. Columbus Batiste, interventional cardiologist and lifestyle advocate. So I meet people at the point where the consequences are no longer theoretical.

The chest pain is real. And the one thing I've learned is this, what shows up in the artery often started long before the emergency, not just with poor food, not just with genetics, but with chronic unresolved stress, stress from work, from caregiving, grief, financial pressure, loneliness, trauma the body never fully let go of.

So let's talk about what stress is really doing to your heart.

How Chronic Stress Harms the Heart

Because once you understand that, the food strategy starts to make a whole lot more sense. Now, let me make this real. Once you imagine a woman who does not fit the picture people expect, she still goes to work and taking care of her family at home.

She's answering texts and phone messages and emails. He's taking of everyone else. she doesn't smoke or drink. There's no dramatic story. This old drama in her life, not the classic heart patient in people's mind.

but she is under relentless pressure. She has poor sleep, emotional strain, constant responsibility, no real recovery. Then, one more hit comes. One more emotional blow, One More Stressful Event, and suddenly, she's in the hospital with chest pain.

Shortness of breath in a heart that is no longer functioning normally. That's the part people miss. The body can compensate for a while until one day it can.

And that's why stress should never be dismissed as just emotional. I want to tell you that your heart is listening to your life. What story is it telling?

Now the first thing you need to know is that stress is not just a mood problem, it is a body problem. And when you're under stress, your body activates your fight or flight system.

That increases your adrenaline, increases cortisol, raises your heart rate, and raises blood pressure. It constricts your blood vessels. Stress is flooring the accelerator while someone is crimping the fuel line.

The engine is screaming for more and more, and it's getting less and less. I'll tell you, that is not a good setup for the heart. Now, if that happens briefly, the body may recover.

But if stress is constant, work, money, poor relationships, caregiving stress, sleep deprivation, then the alarm system, it keeps firing. And when that happened, you can get higher blood pressure, high blood sugar, more abdominal fat.

more inflammation, more endothelial dysfunction, and more blood vessels that do not relax the way that they should. So stress is not just something that you feel.

It's something your arteries and your heart feel as well. Here's where it gets serious. Stress is just not something which contributes to disease over time.

Stress Triggers and Vulnerable Patients

In some people, it can help trigger an immediate event. Acute stress, anger, fear, grief, emotional shock, trauma, they've all been linked to chest pain, heart attacks, arrhythmias, Takosubu, also known as the broken heart syndrome.

That means that emotional stress, it can create a real measurable heart problem. Not imaginary, not exaggerated, but real. And from the cath lab perspective, this matters because sometimes the labs are not the whole story.

Sometimes numbers are the worst in the room, But the stress burden is enormous. and that is what people miss when they only focus on the numbers. Yes, cholesterol numbers matter.

yes, blood pressure numbers, matter yes diabetes numbers But stress changes the terrain those risk factors are operating in. Acute stress, yes, it can act like a trigger.

Chronic stress. It acts like gasoline on the fire. So who's the most vulnerable? Anybody. Anyone can be affected, but stress is most dangerous when it lands on top of plaque.

High blood pressure. poor sleep, insulin resistance, inflammation, and metabolic dysfunction. That is when the system becomes more fragile. And research also suggests that women may be especially vulnerable to certain forms of stress-related heart disease, including stress related heart attacks and heart failure.

So yes, two people can look similar on paper, but the one carrying chronic psychological distress may have a much higher real-world risk. and that's why stress deserves to be taken seriously in cardiology.

What do you do about it? I'll tell you, just relax is not a strategy. Trust me. You need ways to build resiliency. And here's the part most people never ever hear in cardiology.

Foods That Buffer Stress Biology

Certain foods do not just seem healthy. They directly influence stress biology. I mean that literally. Each one targets a different point in the chain that connects stress to heart disease.

Not sure? Let me show you exactly how. Alright, the first food group, I'm gonna call it the cortisol buffers. Flaxseed, chia, and walnuts. These are plant-based sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

And here's what makes them different from just healthy fats. Your body incorporates omega 3s directly into cell membranes. Now when those membrane become more fluid, more flexible, something important begins to happen.

The inflammatory signaling proteins that stress activates, they have a harder time clustering together. And there is a master switch in your cells called NF-kappa-B.

I want you to think of NF kappa B as the inflammatory alarm button. Stress, the hormones, hit that button, omega-3s, by changing the structure of the membrane itself, make that harder to press.

Okay, the second group of foods, that polyphenol defense, berries and pomegranates, green tea and dark chocolate. Now this group, it works on a different target.

The nervous system's own braking system. All right, let me explain. Your brain has an accelerator and a brake. the

accelerator is glutamate. This is the main excitatory neurotransmitter.

now the brake is GABA, The Main Inhibitory Neurotransmitter. So under chronic stress, the accelerator stays pressed and the break gets weaker. That helps you to surge forward.

Green tea, it contains a compound called L-theanine. L theanin has been associated with increased GABA availability in the brain. It also competes with glutamate at its receptor sites, essentially buffering the excitatory signal.

Okay, the food group number three, The Gut Brain Reset. Talk about beans and lentils, oats and vegetables, and all the other high fiber foods. Now, most people think fiber is all about digestion, but what fiber does to your stress response is one of the most under-appreciated mechanisms in all of cardiovascular medicine.

So here's what happens. When gut bacteria, they ferment dietary fiber, They produce compounds called short-chain fatty acids. Now the main one is butyrate.

In butyrate, it travels to the brain because it's small enough to cross the blood-brain barrier. And once there, It directly suppresses the expression of CRF, corticotropin releasing factor.

Now CRF is the very first signal in the cortisol cascade. It is a hypothalamus pulling the first alarm lever and butyrate helps turn down that lever. Okay, what's food group number four?

This one I'm calling the magnesium fix. Leafy greens, pumpkin seeds, beans and avocado. Magnesium, it may be the most mechanistically documented mineral in stress biology.

And here's why that matters. Your cortisol response, it has three steps. Step one, the hypothalamus releases CRH, that first alarm signal.

Magnesium, Vitamin C, and Lifestyle Patterns

step two, The pituitary releases ACTH. It forwards that alarm downstream. The adrenal glands, they produce cortisol. Magnesium, It breaks all three. it stops it.

In inhibits CRh release from the hypothalamis. And it reduces ACth sensitivity at the pitutary. and it directly suppress cortisol secretion at adrenogland.

So here's the part that makes it clinically important. Stress, it depletes magnesium. Cortisol increases urinary magnesium excretion. So the more stressed you are, the magnesium you lose.

And the most magnesium, you loose, more reactive your stress system becomes. Food group number five. Adrenal rescue foods. Citrus and bell peppers. Broccoli and kiwi.

Strawberries. This one surprises people. Your adrenal glands, the same ones that produce cortisol, contain some of the highest concentrations of vitamin C in your entire body.

That's not just a coincidence. When the pituitary sends the ACTH signal to the adrenal gland, produce cortisone now, these adrenal glans do something interesting.

They release a surge of Vitamin C into the bloodstream at the moment. Not after, at that same moment, vitamin c is the primary antioxidant protecting those cells from burning out.

It also acts as a biological break. helping to terminate the cortisol response once the acute stress has passed. Let me give you one more bonus point.

It's not just what you eat, it's also the overall pattern. If your life is built around ultra processed foods, high sugar,

poor sleep, stimulants all day, scrolling all night, and chaotic eating, you're constantly pushing the body in the wrong direction.

You cannot keep hitting the gas pedal and expect the engine to cool down or stop. So yes, adding the right food helps, but also pay attention to the pattern that keeps the system stressed, because every meal is either adding friction or adding support.

Here's a big takeaway. Stress is not just a mental health issue, it's cardiovascular issue. And food is just not a calorie. Food is information. It tells your hormones what to do.

Key Takeaways and Call to Action

It tells your immune system what to do. It tell your blood vessels what do do, and it even affects how reactive your body becomes to stress. So when you change your food, you're not just eating differently.

You're changing your internal environment. Now the goal is not to remove every stress from your life. That's not realistic. The goal to build the body that does not break under the weight of it.

Building resiliency. A heart that's harder to break. An nervous system that knows how to bounce back. Because somebody out there that you love is still going to work.

They're answering text messages, they're taking care of everyone else, calling it life, not knowing that their body is quietly keeping score. I want you to send this to them.

And if this video helped you, hit the like and share with someone who's caring way too much right now. What you remember, if you wanna go fast, yeah, go alone.

If you want to go far, together. Let's go farther together by building healthier hearts, stronger communities. So like it, share it. Send it save a life.