This Happens Before Chest Pain—Here's What It Means Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Private Warning Signs of Heart Disease

A change in blood flow that shows up in your most private moments, this could be your first warning sign of heart disease. Now, most people, they only treat the symptom, but the real problem is damage to your blood vessels.

And if you ignore it now, you may not get another warning, because this is something I see all the time. Today, I want to show you what your body is trying to tell you and how to reverse it.

I'm Dr. Columbus Batiste, an interventional cardiologist and a lifestyle advocate. I've taken care of patients in their 40s who have come in with heart attacks.

No chest pain, no warning, No Hollywood moment. And when we went back through their history, there was always one symptom, something private, Something they noticed, but never talked about.

They had been there for years and that symptom is something we don't talk about enough for men. It's erectile dysfunction. For women, it's decreased arousal, dryness, and reduced sensitivity.

Now these are not just hormonal symptoms. They actually start with endothelium, the inner lining of your blood vessels. When that lining is healthy, blood flows smoothly.

How Blood Vessel Damage Affects Sexual Function

But when it is damaged, you lose nitric oxide. Nitric Oxide is the molecule that tells your blood vessels to relax. And without nitlic oxide, your vessels cannot open properly.

So it affects the brain, the heart, and it shows up in sexual function. Now let me show you the men's data first. There was a large population study out of Olmsted County and they looked at men in their 40s.

I said 40's with erectile dysfunction. And what they found was striking. Men between the ages of 40 and 49 with erectile dysfunction had dramatically higher rates of coronary artery disease.

In fact, their risk was nearly 50 times higher compared to men without erectal dysfunction. And here's why that matters. That relationship, it was much weaker in older men.

Now this tells us something. It tells something critical. in younger men, this isn't just a symptom. it's an early vascular warning sign. and we see the same pattern even in women.

The same vascular system, the nitric oxide pathway, same dependence on blood flow. In biology, it's the signal just shows up differently because men are from Mars and women are Venus.

Women with cardiovascular disease can experience sexual dysfunction at rates up to 90% compared to about 40% in the general population. After a heart attack, risk more than doubles.

Now this tells us something important. This is not just about hormones. It's about blood vessels. And here's the part most people have never connected.

The medications men take for erectile dysfunction, you know, You've seen the commercial, the blue pill.

ED as an Early Cardiovascular Warning

and the others in that class, they don't create anything new. They don' add hormones, They dont' give you

performance. What they do is amplify the signal your blood vessels were already supposed to receive.

They work on nitric oxide, the same molecule we just talked about. These medications block an enzyme called PDE5, which normally breaks down nitrous oxide signal.

So the drug doesn't create blood flow. It protects the bloodflow pathway your body is trying to use. Now this tells us something. Every time one of these medications works, it's proof that this is a blood vessel problem.

It's not a performance problem, and it's proof that your vascular system still has capacity to respond. So the question is, how long will that capacity last if the underlying damage keeps progressing?

Because the pill treats the signal, it does not repair the vessel. Now let me tell you about a patient. Now this is really a version of a patient that I see all the time.

He was about 48, he came in in the middle of the night with a heart attack. No chest pain in weeks before, no warning signs he told anyone about, No family history he'd been worried about.

Got to the cath lab. We opened the vessel. He did well. But when we sat down afterwards to go through his history, his wife always loved having family in the room because she gave the goods up.

And she said something that changed the conversation. She said that he'd been struggling in a bedroom for about four years. he hadn't told his primary care doctor that had been ordering the blue pill online quietly for years and I want to be clear about something here.

Stress, Inflammation, and Vessel Damage

The pill wasn't what hurt him. What hurt was the silence around it. Because every time he ordered that prescription, his body was telling him something.

It was something was wrong with his blood vessels and he was treating the signal while the vessel kept failing. Now if he had broadened up four years earlier in a doctor's visit, we could have been more thorough with checking his blood pressure, cholesterol, his inflammation.

We might have taken a test to look at his coronary arteries before that day. He didn't need a different pill, he needed a conversation. So if this is a vascular signal, what's actually driving the damage?

And for a lot of people, this is where stress shows up first. Not as chest pain, not as a diagnosis, but as change in blood flow. Because stress can directly affect your circulation.

Now most people think stress is emotional. Your body treats it actually as vascular damage. When you're under chronic stress, your nervous system stays switched on, you blood pressure remains up, heart rate remains Your blood vessels are squeezed tight.

That constant pressure, it damages that endothelium. And over time, It leads to formation of compounds called advanced glycation end products or AGEs.

Now these are formed when sugar and protein interact under conditions of stress and they act like a kind of biological residue. They stiffen your blood vessel from the inside.

Almost the same way overcooked meat or food becomes tough and rigid. It doesn't stop there. Stress also depletes a molecule called NAD. Now, N. A. D. is essential for cellular repair, especially in your blood vessels.

And it's not just being used up. Stressed accelerates how fast you burn through it. So your vessels are being damaged faster and they're losing the ability to heal.

That's why you see it early in the smallest vessels first. long before a cardiac event. How many people are managing stress for their mood and they are missing what is doing to their circulation?

Diet, TMAO, and Loss of Protective Fiber

But stress doesn't act alone. It changes what you do next. And here's where the mechanism meets the refrigerator under stress. We don't just eat more, we eat differently.

Because stress equals dessert spilled backwards. we reach for sugar, for fat, process foods, and here is what often gets missed. Many of those foods come packaged with animal-based protein.

Fast food, processed meats, high heat cooked meals. So now stress isn't just changing your behavior, it's setting up the next layer of damage. Now let's take that one step deeper.

Not all food behaves the same. High intake of processed and high-heat cooked animal foods they can increase inflammation. They accelerate plaque and damage your vascular function.

You're not just eating protein, you're programming inflammation, but that's only half the problem. Some of these foods also feed the compound called TMAO, trimethylamine oxide.

And this is produced by your gut bacteria when you eat foods like red meat and eggs. So TML, it acts like a silent vessel damager. It increases that inflammation and it impairs blood vessel function and it raises the clotting risk.

So here's a deeper layer. Those same advanced glycation end products your body makes under stress, you can also take in through your diet, especially from animal proteins cooked at high heat, grilling and frying and broiling.

Now stress is increasing AGEs from the inside in your diet is increasing them from the outside. That's a double hit on your blood vessels.

Foods That Restore Nitric Oxide and Blood Flow

And when animal protein goes up in the diet, guess what goes down? The fiber. Fiber is what protects your body vessels, it feeds your gut bacteria to produce protective compounds that improve circulation, support nitric oxide, and reduce inflammation.

So when you remove fiber, you've removed protection. Now the real question becomes, if stress is damaging your vessels and your diets is adding fuel, Can food really help reverse it?

Well, this is how you start to restore your blood flow. You gotta eat beets and arugula and spinach. These are rich in natural nitrates, which your body converts into nitric oxide.

When you eat berries and pomegranate and even dark chocolate, these contain polyphenols which help protect the nitrous oxide when you consume lentils and chickpeas and beans.

these provide arginine, a building block for nitroxide. When you chomp down on flaxseed and nuts, these reduce your inflammation and improve vascular flexibility.

And this is where it gets encouraging. There was a recent analysis of 14 studies with over 27,000 men, and they found that a plant-based dietary pattern was associated with about 30% lower risk of erectile dysfunction.

And they called out specific foods. Men with the highest nut intake had nearly half the risk of men who ate the fewest. And when you combine diet with exercise, we know we always have to move.

The benefit can be even greater. In the same analysis, the combined approach, it cuts your risk by about 50%. Now these foods, they work because they support nitric oxide.

Lifestyle Changes and the Call to Act Early

They reduce inflammation. they reduce arterial stiffness and they improve endothelial function. And there's another benefit. Many of these foods also support rebuilding NAD, which helps your body restore its ability to repair without increasing TMAO, without adding more AGEs, Which brings us back to where we started.

These foods don't just change labs, they help your blood vessels work again. The problem isn't performance, the problem is blood flow. and blood flow problems don't stay private.

They become heart attacks, they become strokes. This is why symptoms show up early, in the smallest arteries first, years before a cardiac event. this is not the end, this the warning, the same warning your body gave you early on.

If you're in your 40s or 50s and you've noticed this in yourself or your partner, even if you haven't talked about it, this is your moment to act. Be someone who listens early.

This may be the earliest warning your body gives you, so don't ignore it. For the next 14 days, two food swaps, one sleep shift, and one stress protocol.

I want you to type flow in the comments. Remember, if want to go fast, go alone. If want go far, together. Let's go far together building healthier hearts and stronger communities.

So like it, share it. Send it save a life.