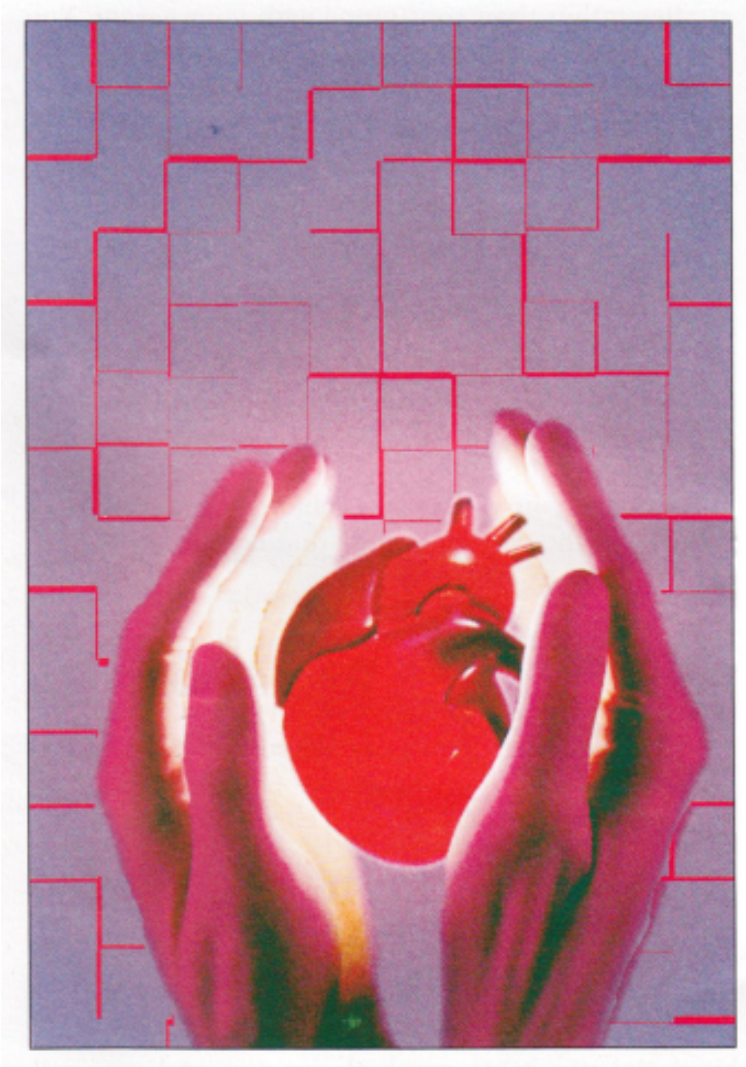
After a Hart Attack



A common word that links together everyone who has had a heart attack is fear. All at once we come face to face with our mortality and fear is one of the main obstacles to recovery. Most people can, according to doctors, achieve better health after a heart attack.

The heart has its own blood vessels to enable it to function normally. A heart attack occurs when one of these becomes blocked, therefore cutting off the blood supply to part of the heart muscle. This is caused by deposition of cholesterol on the vessel walls producing a furring-up effect. This narrowing is a gradual process, so the

attack is preceded by symptoms of angina, where insufficient blood reaches the muscle thus leading to tight chest pain.

What is more important to a person who has suffered a heart attack is that he/she is restored to full health and a normal lifestyle as soon as possible. The biggest obstacle to this ideal is, however, a lack of morale and emotional insecurity on the part of the patient. Doctors normally recommend four basic rules: a daily exercise programmed, reduction of weight to normal levels, control of fat content in blood, a healthy diet and adequate relaxation. Smoking is totally banned.

A sensible exercise plan can be devised. For example, a tree a mile away from home can mark the length of a daily walk. The first walk should be performed slowly, and the pace increased each time so that no adverse symptoms develop. If chest pain develops the speed should be reduced. Six weeks after the attack the exercise can be stepped up to include swimming and an exercise cycle.

Lowering cholesterol in the diet is vital but it is important to enjoy food as well. It can be depressing to many people when they try and avoid every ounce of fat. A diet containing unlimited fruit and vegetables with lean meat, poultry, fish and red rice gives a good variety of meals. Supplement your diet with high doses of vitamin E, daily. Three capsules of concentrated fish oil, a teaspoon of lecithin granules and magnesium are also recommended. Two garlic capsules a day will increase the passage of fats to the liver where they are destroyed. Plenty of fiber in the diet will bind cholesterol in the intestines thus preventing its absorption.

A combination of regular exercise and a low-fat diet reduces weight to normal in the case of over- weight people. But stress should be considered too. Stress plays a major part in many illnesses. Becoming physically fit reduces stress but relaxation techniques are also important. Set aside time for meditation or yoga each day.

> **It takes great dedication to radically alter your lifestyle, so make a plan and stand by it.**

by Malkanthi Leitan.