

## Listen to your heart – it knows what’s right and it’s often correct

Tomorrow its World Heart Day and this is a good time to pay attention to what your body is telling you. It may even prevent you from suffering a major heart attack.

The World Heart Federation (WHF) is a nongovernmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is committed to leading the global fight against heart disease and stroke.

Each year 17.3 million people die of cardiovascular disease, 80% in the developing world, where obesity and poor diet are to blame.

Donovan Fortuin almost became a statistic himself, but quick action and a medical procedure has put his life on a new, healthier track.

### NWABISA MASIZA

IT IS often said that you should listen to your heart because it knows what is right, and it’s often accurate.

When your heart is in need of medical attention, don’t ignore the signs indicating a potential heart attack, call 10111 if need be. In September, we commemorate Heart Awareness Month, which culminates in World Heart Day on the 29th. Leading pharmacies such as Dischem and Clicks have started offering free heart and blood pressure screenings, with the aim of promoting a path to a cardiac risk-free life.

Chest pains, shortness of breath, pressure in the upper back and breaking out in cold sweat, are just among some of the symptoms to look out for, that could possibly indicate a heart attack, also otherwise referred to as a myocardial infarction (MI).



**SURVIVOR:** Donovan Fortuin, who suffered a debilitating heart attack, is now striving for a healthier lifestyle and visiting Melomed Gatesville Hospital for his private checkups. Picture: Zaid Samuels

It was just two years ago when heart attack survivor Donovan Fortuin’s life took a scary turn. But one that set the stage for a new and healthier living lifestyle.

Fortuin, 49, a license testing officer, husband, and father of three, vividly remembers the day the early signs of stomach pains and sweats had led him to believe his symptoms were not that serious.

“At first I thought I was just experiencing pains that would go away, until one Saturday evening when reality hit me with the knowledge that I was having a severe heart attack.

When I had these pains in my chest, I knew what struck me and went to see my doctor, who then referred me to Dr Chevaan Hendrickse”.

He said he was thankful that his cardiac intervention/surgery proceeded without any complications, especially after losing his father to the disease, and with there being a generic predisposition in the family.

Despite the setback, Fortuin is determined not to let his condition hold him back, and said remaining on a strict diet is his main priority.

“At work, I would always use boosters to keep me going and kept drinking energy drinks, but now I am totally off that.

I have also cut out sugar completely, and can now say that I’m feeling great”, he said.



**LIFESAVER:** Cardiologist Specialist Dr Chevaan Hendrickse speaks on cardiovascular disease at the Melomed Gatesville Hospital, in light of World Heart Day. Picture: Zaid Samuels

Cardiologist Specialist Dr Chevaan Hendrickse said that Fortuin said that Fortuin ended up at MelomedHospital’s emergency unit in an unstable condition, where he was treated with medication.

“When he was admitted into Gatesville, we also offered the option for him to go into the cardiac laboratory, where we do a special procedure called a cardiac catheterization, to access his arteries. In his case, we performed the procedure via the radial artery, where we accessed his coronary artery through the arm”, he said. All arteries lead to the heart.

Hendrickse said that they managed to access Fortuin’s coronary artery, where a wire was inserted to reach to the culprit artery, which had been blocked, and managed to relieve the obstruction with a balloon and a stent (metal) device.

Speaking about today’s technology and how it has made difference, he observes that it has become considerably more advanced.

“In the past, this kind of equipment was unavailable.

If we look at the treatment options available during cardiac catheterization, we can treat many complex lesions, which in the past may have required open surgery”, he said.

He mentioned that percutaneous coronary intervention, percutaneous valve placement, pacing, and cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) are among the impressive innovations in the cardiology field.

Heart Awareness Month is celebrated annually, and dedicated to raise awareness on cardiovascular disease, while also encouraging appropriate treatment.

### Healthy heart tips

**GIVE up smoking:** If you’re a smoker, quit. It’s the single best thing you can do for your heart health.

Smoking is one of the main causes of coronary heart disease. A year after giving up, your risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.

You’re more likely to stop smoking for good if you use NHS stop smoking services. Visit the Smokefree website or ask your GP for help with quitting.

**Get active:** Getting – and staying – active can reduce your risk of developing heart disease. It can also be a great mood booster and stress buster.

Do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. One way to achieve this target is by doing 30 minutes of activity on five days a week. Fit it in where you can, such as by cycling to work.

**Manage your weight:** Being overweight can increase your risk of heart disease. Stick to a healthy, balanced diet low in fat and sugar, with plenty of fruit and vegetables, combined with regular physical activity.

Find out if you are a healthy weight with the BMI calculator. If you’re overweight, try our 12-week weight loss plan.

**Eat more fibre:** Eat plenty of fibre to help lower your risk of heart disease – aim for at least 30g a day. Eat fibre from a variety of sources, such as wholemeal bread, bran, oats and wholegrain cereals, potatoes with their skins on, and plenty of fruit and veg.

**Cut down on saturated fat:** Eating too many foods that are high in saturated fat can raise the level of cholesterol in your blood. This increases your risk of heart disease. Choose leaner cuts of meat and lower-fat dairy products like 1% fat milk over full-fat (or whole) milk.

**Get your five-day:** Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. They’re a good source of fibre, vitamins and minerals. There are lots of tasty ways to get your 5 A DAY, like adding chopped fruit to cereal or including vegetables in your pasta sauces and curries. Get more 5 A DAY fruit and veg tips.

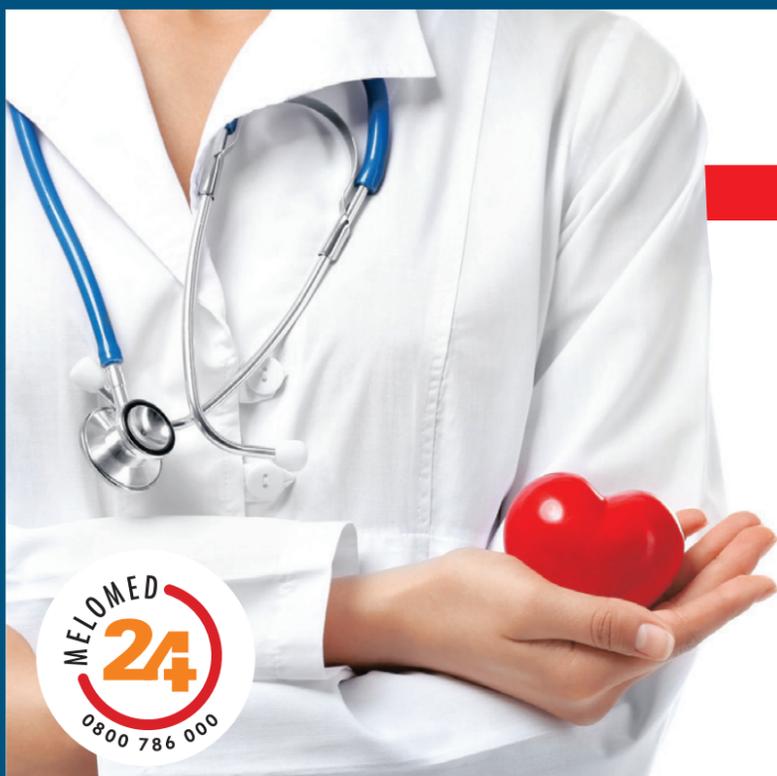
**Cut down on salt:** To maintain healthy blood pressure, avoid using salt at the table and try adding less to your cooking. Once you get used to the taste of food without added salt, you can cut it out completely.

Watch out for high salt levels in ready-made foods. Most of the salt we eat is already in the foods we buy. Check the food labels – a food is high in salt if it has more than 1.5g salt (or 0.6g sodium) per 100g.

Adults should eat less than 6g of salt a day in total – that’s about one teaspoon.

**Eat fish:** Eat fish at least twice a week, including a portion of oily fish. Fish such as mackerel, sardines, fresh tuna and salmon are a source of omega-3 fats, which can help protect against heart disease.

**Drink less alcohol:** Don’t forget alcohol contains calories. Regularly drinking more than the NHS recommends can have a noticeable impact on your waistline. Try to keep to the recommended daily alcohol limits to reduce the risk of serious problems with your health, including risks to your heart health.



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WORLD HEART DAY - 29 SEPTEMBER 2017

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Melomed heart centres is not only about the most advanced equipment, but also having highly qualified interventional cardiologists with proven track records & experience in the cardiology field working on a full time basis in our centres of excellence.

State-of-the-art Heart Centres of Excellence with emergency medical care right on your doorstep, backed by our interventional cardiologists:



DR. MC. HENDRICKSE

DR. SN. THAKERSEE

DR. V. FREEMAN

DR. P. NTULI

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.MELOMED.CO.ZA OR CONTACT US: INFO@MELOMED.CO.ZA