

Unit 8 HEART DISEASE

Task 1

Before you read an article, think of what you already know about the subject. Discuss the following questions with a partner.

What are the causes and symptoms of heart disease?

Is heart disease hereditary?

What ways do we have to prevent and treat heart disease?

What about heart disease and sport?

Task 2

For each paragraph, read the first sentence and think of a question that you expect this paragraph to answer. Then choose the question below that is most like your question. The first paragraph has been done as an example.

___ A How has the change in attitude affected people's behaviour?

___ B How are attitude and behaviour changes affecting people's health?

___ C How are people's attitudes changing?

1 D What are the effects of these discoveries about heart disease?

Heart Disease and Changing Attitudes

- 1 In the last decades of the twentieth century, medical researchers showed that heart disease is associated with certain factors in our daily lives: stress, smoking, poor nutrition, and lack of exercise. Doctors and other health experts began to emphasise the fact that we can reduce the risk of heart disease by paying attention to these factors. As a result, many people realize that there is a connection between heart disease and lifestyle.
- 2 This new awareness is changing public attitudes about health. In the past, people tended to think that it was sufficient to have access to doctors on whose expertise they could rely. Now people understand that merely receiving the best treatment for illness or injury is not enough. They have learned to take more responsibility for maintaining and improving their own health.
- 3 The shift in attitude can be seen in some behavioural changes that have occurred since the 1970s. In the United States today, many smokers have broken the habit and fewer people take it up. The percentage of smokers is far below the level of the 1960s and 1970s. People are becoming more serious about reducing stress. Many have changed their diets and are eating food with less fat and cholesterol. More people are aware of the benefits of regular and frequent exercise like walking, running, and swimming; some even walk or bicycle to work instead of driving or using public transportation.
- 4 The health effects of these changes in attitude and behaviour are clear. Since the 1950s, the number of deaths from heart disease per 100,000 has fallen. A partial explanation for this is that better diagnosis and treatment is helping people avoid or survive heart attacks. However, health experts have no doubt that much of the improvement has occurred because a better-educated public has become aware of the benefits of prevention.

Task 3

Identify the sentence that best expresses the main idea of the article.

- a) Better methods of diagnosis and treatment have reduced the number of deaths from heart disease in the United States.
- b) Medical research has shown that people should reduce the amount of fat they eat.
- c) As a result of information about the causes of heart disease, people are changing the way they think about health care and are leading healthier lives.
- d) The percentage of Americans who smoke today is much lower than it was in the 1970s.

Task 4

Look back at the article to answer the following questions.

1. What factor does the writer NOT associate with heart disease?
 - a) Unhealthy food
 - b) Cigarettes
 - c) Poverty
 - d) Lack of regular exercise
2. The article suggests that doctors in the past did not always inform their patients about the importance of exercise and good nutrition for health. True or false?
3. What change in attitude does the writer describe?
4. It is still too early to see results from the change in attitude that the article describes. True or false?

Task 5

Find words in the article that are similar in meaning to the following:

- To be connected with something (par. 1)
- To give special importance to sth. (par. 1)
- Knowing sth. (par. 2)
- Enough (adjective) (par. 2)
- A change in position or direction (par. 3)
- Happened, existed (par. 3)
- A feeling of being uncertain or not believing sth. (par. 4)
- Helpful effect (par. 4)

Task 6

Complete the sentences below with suitable forms of words from 5.

1. A vitamin deficiency occurs when a person's diet does not have _____ vitamins to maintain good health.
2. The article raised _____ about how effective the new drug really was.
3. There is little _____ of the health risks associated with obesity.
4. Sugar _____ naturally in fruit.
5. We've seen a _____ in power away from workers towards employers.
6. She _____ the importance of early diagnosis of the disease.

(adapted from Pakenham, K.J. *Making Connections*. CUP, 2004)

Task 7 Listening

Watch a TED talk to find out about the function of the heart:

<http://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-the-heart-actually-pumps-blood-edmond-hui/>