

Many Factors Lead to Heart Attacks

Adapted from the newspaper column entitled "Dr. Paul Donohue"

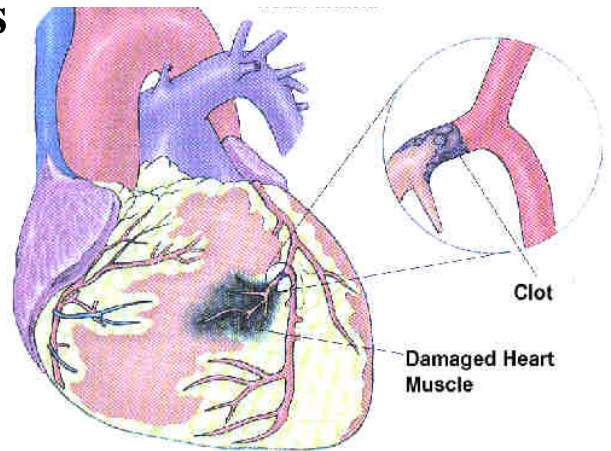
Pre-reading

Questions:

- Do you know anyone who has had a heart attack?
- What causes a heart attack?

Definitions:

- Cholesterol – a waxy, fatty substance
- Hormone – a substance that moves around the body in the blood
- Artery – a blood vessel that carries blood away from the heart
- Platelet – a jelly-like disk, smaller than a red blood cell, found in the blood
- Clot – a thick lump or mass of liquid, such as blood



Reading

16 Dear Doctor: At age 43 my husband had a heart attack. No one in his family
33 has had one. His father is alive and active at age 83. My husband was a faithful
48 jogger and a nonsmoker. He ate healthy foods. How could he have had a heart
59 attack? Could it be stress? He worked 80 hours a week.

73 Answer: Stress is a factor in some heart attacks. For most heart attacks, many
89 factors are found. Your husband tried to lead a healthy life. He did many things that
98 are supposed to protect a person from heart attacks.

111 Things you did not mention were his cholesterol and blood pressure. If both
119 were normal, then stress is a reasonable answer.

133 Stress causes the release of stress hormones. Over a long period of time, those
144 hormones are **destructive**. They make blood platelets sticky. Sticky platelets cause
151 clots to form in the heart arteries.

166 Clots block the flow of blood to the heart. Blood carries oxygen to the cells.
180 Cells die without oxygen. Dead cells mean a damaged heart. Over 90% of heart
187 attacks are caused by a blood clot.

Understanding

1. What are some possible causes of a heart attack? _____

2. What do cells need in order to live? _____

3. Why are clots dangerous? _____

4. How had the man in this reading tried to keep himself healthy? _____

5. What does the word **destructive** mean? _____

Writing

Choice A: What did you learn from the reading?

Choice B: How do you try to stay healthy?
