Depression and Coronary Artery Disease

There is a link between depression and coronary artery disease. People with heart disease are more likely to get depression. And if a person has both depression and heart disease, they may not stay as healthy as possible. They are less likely to take their medicines and get regular exercise. And this may raise their risk of having a heart attack.

Watch for symptoms of depression
Depression causes you to feel sad and hopeless much of the time. It’s different from normal feelings of sadness, grief, or low energy. Depression is a medical problem that needs treatment. If you think you may be depressed, see your doctor for diagnosis and treatment right away. Untreated depression may get worse. And your heart disease may get worse too.

Your doctor can help
If you have heart disease, your doctor will probably ask you some simple questions to check for any symptoms of depression. But if you think you have symptoms of depression, do not wait to ask for help. Your doctor can help find out if you are depressed and talk to you about your options for treatment.

On your regular doctor visits, he or she might ask how often you have been bothered by any of the following problems in past 2 weeks:

- You don’t have interest or pleasure in doing things.
- You feel down, depressed, or hopeless.

If your doctor thinks you might have depression symptoms, he or she will ask you more about your symptoms. Your doctor may refer you to another doctor who diagnoses and treats depression.

Ask for help
If you think you might be depressed, talk to your doctor. The sooner you know if you are depressed, the sooner you can get treatment. Treating depression is good for your health.

Many people have concerns about seeking treatment for a mental health problem. You might feel too embarrassed to ask for help. Or maybe you think that you’ll get over depression on your own. You may think it’s a sign of weakness, or you don’t want people to know about it. It’s important to overcome these reasons for not seeking treatment.

Take care of yourself
If you have depression and heart disease, try hard to stay healthy. Having both of these conditions can make it hard to take your medicines or do healthy things like exercise and eat right.

For friends and family
If you think that someone you know is depressed, the best thing you can do is to get the person to see a doctor. The sooner someone with depression gets treatment, the sooner he or she will feel better.