

† This information is a joint effort of the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL and †
the **Central Ministerial Association** of Santa Rosa county.

This program was formerly known as **Savvy Senior**. Information source - The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.

Back Issues: Many of these can be found on the Santa Rosa County web site at <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/coad/index.html> . On arrival at this page, place cursor on the button entitled **LINKS**, then holding the left mouse button down move to the right and click on the button entitled: **SENIOR SUPPORT**. For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

Heart Attack Season

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200750

Dear Savvy Senior,

When I had a heart attack last year my doctor told me to take extra precaution during the winter months because my risks of having another one could increase. Is this true? How can the seasons of the year affect your heart?
Old Man Winter

Dear Old,

Everyone knows winter is cold and flu season, but most people don't know that it's also the prime season for heart attacks too. Here's what you should know.

Heart Attack Season

It's true! In the United States, the risks of having a heart attack during the winter months are twice as high as in the summertime. And, a heart attack in the winter is also more likely to be fatal than a heart attack during any other time of year. Why? Lots of reasons and they're not all tied to cold weather. Even people who live in warm climates have an increased risk.

Wintertime Risks

Here are some reasons why heart attacks are more common during the winter than other months and some tips to help you combat them:

Cold weather ♦

When a person gets cold, the body's automatic response is to narrow the blood vessels. Cutting down on blood flow to the skin means the body doesn't lose as much heat. But for people who already have arteries filled with plaque, the narrowing of the blood vessels raises the risk that one will become blocked, triggering a heart attack. The narrowing also increases blood pressure, which can strain a diseased heart. So bundle up this winter and keep your blood flowing freely.

Snow shoveling ♦

Believe it or not, studies show that heart attack rates jump dramatically in the first few days after a major snowstorm, usually a result of snow shoveling. Shoveling snow is incredibly strenuous causing the heart to work harder and raising your blood pressure. Couple that with the cold temperatures and heart attack risk soars. If you must shovel, push rather than lift the snow as much as possible, stay warm and take frequent breaks - or better yet buy a snow blower. And if you're over age 50, overweight or out of shape, or have suffered a previous heart attack, don't shovel at all.

New Year's resolutions ♦

It's not just shovelers who run the risk of taxing their heart in the winter. Every January 1, millions of people join gyms or start exercise programs as part of their New Year's resolution to get in shape, and many may overexert themselves too soon. If you have a heart condition or risk factors for heart disease like high cholesterol and high blood pressure, talk to your doctor about what may be appropriate for you.

Stressful season ♦

The holiday season for many people is a very stressful time, causing anxiety, loneliness and depression which are also linked to heart attacks. Check your mood at www.depressionscreening.org and get help, if needed.

Holiday feasting - People tend to eat more, drink more, and gain more weight during the holiday season and winter months - all of which are hard on the ticker and risky for someone with heart disease. Keep a watchful eye on your diet, avoid binging on fatty foods or alcohol, and remember, everything in moderation!

Less daylight ♦

It's a fact that less daylight in the winter can worsen mood problems, increase depression risk, and can also affect the heart. Studies have looked at heart-attack patients and found they have lower levels of vitamin D (which comes from sunlight) than healthy people. To boost your vitamin D intake during the dark winter months, everyone over 50 should take a daily vitamin that contains at least 400 IU (international units) of vitamin D. Those over age 70 need at least 600 IU.

Flu ♦

The flu is another culprit responsible for the winter surge in heart attacks. A flu infection can increase blood pressure, stir up white blood cell activity, and change C-reactive protein and fibrinogen levels in the blood - all bad news for your heart. Get an annual flu shot (see www.flucliniclocator.org). It can cut your heart attack risk in half.