

EMERSON

Advisor

YOUR HEALTH QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR EXPERTS.

Q My father had a heart attack at 52. I'm turning 50; should I be worried?



Because you inherit your genes, there is a possibility you inherited the genes that predispose you to cardiovascular disease. However, that doesn't mean you will suffer a heart attack at a relatively young age, similar to your father. We're finding out that family history is a piece of the puzzle—not the whole story.

That's good news, because it means you largely control your own destiny, although there are rare situations where whole families develop cardiovascular disease. A combination of daily exercise, a healthy diet and taking your medications—if any are needed—goes a long way in preventing cardiovascular disease.

This is why heart attacks are occurring less frequently today and, for the unlucky few who do experience a heart attack, patients are surviving much longer today compared to the past. The reasons for this include the widespread use of statins (the cholesterol-lowering medications) and more effective and better-tolerated blood pressure medications. Thanks to these and other medications, combined with diet and exercise, many people are avoiding the development of cardiovascular disease.

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JONATHAN GREENE, MD

Cardiologist – Emerson Cardiovascular Associates