



February 14, 2017 – Grand Rapids, MI

Broken Heart Syndrome

Happy Valentine's Day! I hope that you and your loved one enjoy celebrating your relationship today. This week's focus is on American Heart Month and specifically heart disease in women. While heart disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women, there's one type of heart disease that affects more women than men: broken heart syndrome. Can you die from a broken heart? Absolutely. We'll find out how this week.

Cardiomyopathy is a weakening of the muscle tissue of the heart. There are four major forms of cardiomyopathy and several minor ones that can affect men, women, and even children. Cardiomyopathy affects up to one in five people and most don't know that they have it until serious symptoms start to develop. Shortness of breath, fatigue, and swelling in the ankles are the first symptoms people may notice, and the symptoms get more severe as the heart continues to weaken. Treatment can range from medications to a heart transplant in severe cases.



Broken heart syndrome is a special type of cardiomyopathy. The primary cause is severe stress such as the death of a loved one, hence the name. It's not limited to extreme bad news; extreme good news can initiate the process as well. I'll explain what happens to the heart in Thursday's post. Until then, give your loved ones extra hugs and kisses today. More than anything, give them the most important thing above all else: time.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: <http://bit.ly/2kWCbsT>

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