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Holiday Heart Disease

Sunday, Dec 09, 2007 - 05:15 PM Updated: 05:43 PM

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A busy day, a big meal and maybe an eggnog or two. It sounds like a recipe for a festive holiday season, but experts say to celebrate with caution.

A report from the Associated Press says December and January are the deadliest months for heart disease.

"People are off work doctors offices are closed and many family and friends are in town visiting so we definitely see our volume increase over the holidays."

Dr. Debra Williams says patients come to Gulf Coast Medical Center for a variety of reasons.

"Typical medical illnesses we're moving into pneumonia season. People eat a little too much party a little too much."

One of the biggest reasons people go to the hospital is because of heart disease.

Busy revelers tend to skip their medications, forget them when traveling, or are unable to get refills far from home.

You may also want to watch those salty snacks.

Too much salt causes fluid retention and makes your heart have to pump faster.

You'll also want to be careful around the alcohol.

That too makes your heart pump harder to get blood to peripheral arteries.

"Stress increases, activity increases and we see it in people who do have a history of cardiac disease and also in people who do not."

What makes the Christmas Coronary even more deadly is a double dose of denial.

"We seem to see a bigger influx after about 2 p.m. In the afternoon and that has to do with the Christmas festivities are over, the big lunch is over with and then people come to tend to their medical problems."

If you have a history of heart disease or believe something could be wrong, Dr. Williams advises you to not just pass it off as typical indigestion or stress, but to go ahead and have things checked out.

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