

## *Module 1, Lesson 1*

### **Transcript**

Hey everyone. Welcome to our first module in the Nutritious Life Studio Master Certification. I am so excited that you're joining me today. We're kicking off our Master Certification with a module on heart disease, which like the title of this lesson implies, is the number one killer in the United States. I'm going to get more into the statistics, you know I love statistics, in a few, but I want to set the stage on why we're devoting an entire module, and our first module, to heart disease.

Okay. Here we go. A third of the deaths in the U.S. are related to heart disease. Pretty crazy. You may know this. Much of the time these are early deaths that can be prevented through lifestyle and behavior changes. I know you all like talking lifestyle and behavior change, that's for sure. This is a big, big area where you can help your clients improve their overall health and lower their risk of developing heart disease. In this lesson we're going to cover the statistics on heart disease in the United States, signs and symptoms of heart disease, and an introduction to your role as a health practitioner as it relates to heart disease.

I'm starting this lesson off again with a few key statistics. These stats are powerful and will set the foundation for just how important the information in the rest of the module is. The following stats are from the American Heart Association. Are you ready? One in three deaths in the U.S. is related to heart disease. That's pretty staggering. 17.6 million deaths globally in 2016. Every 40 seconds an American is having a heart attack. Yikes. Someone in the U.S. also has a stroke every 40 seconds. I would go on and on, but I think you're getting the picture. Heart health is a major issue in the U.S. and in the rest of the world.

Most of my clients have heart disease in their family, if not themselves. Right? I mean many of you I'm sure have it in your family history. I know I do. I feel like we're pretty cavalier about it. Maybe because heart disease mainly affects older people in their 60s and 70s, and it seems like an inevitability. Do you know what I mean? It's like we're all expecting to go to the doctor one day and have them tell us our cholesterol is high, or our blood pressure is elevated.

I had a client named Simon who is a healthy weight. He was 40 years old, and came to me to work on his nutrition as he was training for an Ironman. During his initial appointment, when I asked about his family history, he told me his mom was on Lipitor, a cholesterol lowering med I'm sure you know, and his dad had had several hospitalizations for blocked arteries and valve

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replacements. But when I asked Simon if he'd had a cardiac workup, he bucked. He was an exerciser and a normal weight, so he thought it would be a waste of money and time to go in for a cardiac checkup.

He admitted that at health fairs that they've offered at work twice in the past few years, he'd been given the news that his cholesterol and triglycerides were high. But I can tell he didn't find that information so meaningful because he couldn't remember the LDL acronym and I had to ask about the triglycerides too. Honestly, I don't know if Simon ever got the cardiac workup I recommended in my plan for him. Without judgment, I tried to spell it out for him that early intervention can prevent strokes and heart attack. It's always a good idea to have a baseline stress test, so I appealed to the athlete in him and tried to convince him that it's cool to perform well and see how he measures up.

When I think about it, I think Simon and so many people like him, I'm sure you know them, don't go for early intervention and management or treatment because they don't like the idea of being put on meds, or they see their friends or family members who are doing okay in spite of a stroke or heart attack. Symptoms of heart disease really range. We know that. We think of the chest pain and numbness in the arm that we hear about and see in the media and movies, but men experience these symptoms more than women. Women are more likely to experience extreme fatigue, nausea, and shortness of breath.

Other generalized symptoms include chest pain, chest tightness, chest pressure, and chest discomfort, shortness of breath like I just mentioned, pain, numbness, weakness, or coldness in your legs or arms. If the blood vessels in those parts of your body are narrowed, pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen, or back. You may also see fluttering in your chest, racing heartbeat, slow heartbeat, lightheadedness, dizziness, fainting or near fainting, pale gray or blue skin color, swelling in the legs, abdomen, or areas around the eyes, easily getting short of breath during exercise or activity, easily tiring during exercise or activity, swelling in the hands, ankles or feet, which you can ask to look at or take by self-report when someone comes into your office.

You should immediately get medical attention if you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, fainting. Of course, these lists are not exhaustive. People may experience heart disease and not present in a classical way at all. I recommend that any of my clients who have a strong history of family heart disease choose a primary care provider who specializes in cardiology. That can be key. We always say there is no glory in prevention, but in this case there is so much glory in the

prevention, and we cannot overstate how important early intervention is. You know I love that term.

On your side of things, make sure your lifestyle plan is loaded with cardioprotective fiber, including fruits, veggies, and whole grains, and prioritize cardiac health in addition to the other goals you set. We'll get more into this in later lessons. But before we head to the next lesson, let's do a quick recap here. Heart disease is the top killer in the U.S., one in three deaths in the U.S. are related to heart disease, and globally there were 17.6 million deaths from heart disease in just 2016 alone.

Symptoms of heart disease can range, but commonly include chest pain, tightness, pressure and discomfort, shortness of breath, pain, numbness, weakness or coldness in your legs or arms, and pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen or back. You can help clients lower risk of heart disease by recommending a cardioprotective diet. Think fruits and veggies, whole grains, and a focus on fiber, and most importantly, by helping them stick with the healthy lifestyle goals that you and your clients set. We'll talk more, of course, about the specifics of heart health in the following lessons. I will see you there.