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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Sex good for your heart

As a chiropractor, I am always encouraging my patients to exercise and live healthy fulfilling lives. I think as somewhat of a joke, an elderly patient emailed me the following article to use as an article in my column. Although amusing, the message is true. I thought you, the readers, might enjoy it!

By Cynthia Ross Cravit, 50Plus.com

Research has shown that sex can make you look younger, reduce stress and help you to sleep better. And now it just might help to prevent coronary disease, according to the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

Drawing upon decades of research, the foundation is recommending sex as a way to stay active and maintain heart health. In a new advertising campaign people over 50 are encouraged to "Get your 30 minutes a day, any way." The billboard campaign features an older couple locked in a passionate embrace -- a woman, scantily dressed in a swimsuit, is hugging a man wearing, well, nothing but a swim cap.

The campaign addresses one of the most important issues affecting the health of older adults -- physical inactivity. In fact, a sedentary lifestyle is responsible for about 20 per cent of cases of coronary heart disease in the UK, as well as an increased risk of other life threatening diseases, the foundation says on its website.

Getting active is especially important for people over 50 because they are at greater risk of heart disease. Only 30 per cent of 50-64 year-olds are active enough to safeguard their health, according to the BHF.

### Sex as exercise

A 2007 U.K. study indicated that a sedentary lifestyle is responsible for 35,000 deaths each year in Britain, the equivalent of someone dying every 15 minutes. Dr. Mike Knapton, director of prevention and care at the British Heart Foundation, told CanWest News Service the prevention of these deaths "is simple and achievable."

"Keeping fit doesn't have to mean sweating it out at the gym, he added.

Research has shown that having sex three times a week over the course of a year burns about the same number of calories as running 120 kilometres.

Sex not only lowers the likelihood of stroke or heart attack, but it has also been found to reduce blood pressure, help with migraine pain and enhance the immune system by triggering the hormone DHEA.

Of course, sex isn't the only way to get moving. Outside of conventional exercise regimens such as walking or jogging, other activities endorsed in the foundation's ad campaign include doing housework, walking the dog, washing the car, swimming, gardening, and dancing.

"I think the campaign is relevant for people the world over," says Lizzy Ray, a spokeswoman for the BHF.

### **Affairs of the heart**

Research points to the health benefits of meaningful social interaction and support. Being happily married for a long time, for example, leads to greater life expectancy for both men and women. However, divorcing then remarrying actually increases the risk of dying prematurely, according to a study in *Health Psychology Journal*.

And a Japanese study found that people who engaged in adulterous relationships were more susceptible to fatal strokes.

Something as simple as holding hands can also have health benefits. Touch has been shown to increase premature babies' weight gain, heal the immune system and reduce risk for coronary disease.