

Get up and move to avoid heart disease

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NEW US research has found that older women who spend most of their day sitting down may be at a higher risk for cardiovascular diseases such as heart disease and stroke. However, reducing this sedentary time by just an hour each day could help reduce this risk.

Led by researchers at the University of California, San Diego, the new study looked at 5,638 women aged 63 to 97 years with no history of heart disease or stroke.

The women were asked to wear a device called an accelerometer for four to seven days to measure their movement and sedentary time 24 hours a day for seven consecutive days. The researchers then followed the women for nearly five years, recording any cardiovascular events. The findings, published in the journal *Circulation*, showed that women who had the highest level of sedentary time, equal to 11 hours a day or more, had the highest risk for cardiovascular disease when compared to those with the the lowest level of sedentary time, equal to nine hours a day or less.

On average, an additional hour of total sedentary time was associated with a 12 per cent increased risk for cardiovascular diseases, and when sedentary included long bouts of sitting, the risk was 52 per cent higher than when sed-



Older women can reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease by getting up and moving around more, according to new research.

entary time was made up of short, regularly interrupted bouts of sitting.

However, the good news is that this risk can

also be lowered by getting up and moving, even if just a little and often, throughout the day. The team also found that reducing sedentary time

by just an hour a day appears to lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases by 12 per cent and heart disease by 26 per cent.

"This study provides further strong evidence of a link between sedentary behaviour, like sitting and laying down, which uses very little energy, and cardiovascular disease," said David Goff, M.D., Ph.D., director of the Division of Cardiovascular Sciences at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) who funded the study. "Sedentary behaviours and inactivity are major risk factors for heart disease, and this research also shows that it is never too late, or too early, to move more and improve your heart health."

"Importantly, the association showed up regardless of a woman's overall health, physical function, and other cardiovascular risk factors, including whether they also were engaging in moderate to vigorous physical activity," commented lead author John Belletiere, Ph.D., who suggests women try to get up and move, even if for just a few minutes more throughout the day.

Co-author Andrea LaCroix agrees, adding, "I recommend to all women who, like me, are over 60, to make a conscious effort to interrupt our sitting by getting up and moving around as often as we can."

AFP Relaxnews