

HEALTH DOSSIER

Early screening & detection

HEART: Frequent chest pain points to a likelihood of coronary heart disease, says Dr Kam. "Less common symptoms include abdominal pain, palpitations, giddiness, shoulder pain and jaw pain. These seem to be more frequent in women who also get it later, usually after menopause," she adds.

Recent advancements in cardiac imaging technology have made it possible to diagnose more, earlier. "A decade ago, it was common to report as normal a scan with findings suggestive of 'low likelihood for adverse cardiac events'. Today, we know that many patients with normal ECG could still have extensive coronary artery disease even though blood flow through the arteries has not been compromised yet," explains Cardiologist Dr Hong. "Applying high-sensitivity CZT crystal cameras over gamma camera technology for heart scans reduces scanning time by 75%. And the 320-slice cardiac computed tomography reduces radiation in a heart scan by 90%."

Says Dr Kam: "Stents have drugs in them that lower the risk of restenosis – narrowing at the same place – and some components are biodegradable and dissolve over time. The metal scaffolding remains, and becomes covered in cells so that it is inside the vessel wall."

EYES: Adults at 40 should get a baseline eye disease screening which can detect abnormalities of the visual system and evidence of systemic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. Says Dr Leo, "Several common eye diseases – diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration

In older athletes who are above 35, the main cause of sudden cardiac death (SCD) is coronary artery disease (CAD). Greater attention must be paid to individuals with a history of it, including those who have had heart attacks, stents, coronary bypasses or a known history of reduced heart function with chronic diseases such as diabetes or kidney disease. These conditions account for 75 to 80% of SCD in this age group. It is very important to assess one's fitness to exercise. In the past few years, there have been tremendous advancements in non-invasive cardiac imaging for more accurate assessment of CAD. We live in exciting times, with rapid advances in imaging and interventional cardiology, which lead to better patient outcomes.



DR ERIC HONG
Cardiologist

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EYES

HEART

URINARY TRACT

