

GIVING WOMEN A **SECOND CHANCE**

A pioneer in care for women with heart disease, Dr. Karin Humphries is studying how to protect women from having a second heart attack.



Heart and Stroke Foundation researcher Dr. Karin Humphries

Dr. Karin Humphries' research is giving the unique needs of women a much-needed voice.

Her studies have already shown that throughout recovery from a heart attack in people under 55, women's health lags significantly behind men's.

Humphries' lens is now focused on a new field of study on the prevention and care for women with heart disease. She is studying how men and women respond to healthy lifestyle behaviours recommended after a heart attack – to

protect them from having another.

“While the high prevalence of traditional cardiac risk factors like diabetes, smoking and high blood pressure contribute, they do not fully explain the poorer outcomes in women,” says Dr. Humphries.

“Our study focuses on exploring non-traditional risk factors such as depression, anxiety and social support.”

She attributes the slower recovery of women in part to prevalent social and

cultural standards that typically place women in this age group in the role of primary caregiver.

“Many of these women have jobs and children, and are perhaps looking after older parents,” says Dr. Humphries.

“Making lifestyle changes can be very hard when you have all of that other stuff to worry about.”

Dr. Humphries is looking to close that gender gap by finding answers that will help women prevent heart disease more effectively and recover faster.

Join us in the quest for healthy lives free of heart disease and stroke.
Donate to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Together we will make it happen.
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SAVING **GRACE**

Grace put her career ahead of her health. When she suffered a heart attack, she quit her job and overhauled her lifestyle.



Grace Dierssen's heart attack was the turning point — the catalyst for a complete lifestyle overhaul.

It wasn't a good time for a health crisis. It was just three days after her 44th birthday and she was scheduled to leave on a European vacation the next week.

Her high-powered job in software development and e-commerce didn't leave much room for cultivating personal health, either.

She ignored the discomfort, exhaustion

and breathing difficulties, wondering if her symptoms were all in her mind, as she headed off to work.

Hours later, an ambulance rushed her to the emergency room.

Soon after the attack, Grace quit her job, made exercise and eating healthy priorities, and she is finally spending time focusing on her own well-being first.

"As women, we tend to put everyone else's needs ahead of ours," says Grace, acknowledging that many

women juggle career, raising children and possibly care for their own parents as well.

"I was conscious of that in my own recovery. I've learned to stick up for myself, and put my health first."

Three years after her heart attack, Grace has made a full recovery, and encourages other women to give their health the full attention it deserves before it's too late.

Thanks to your support, research is empowering Canadians to live healthy lives.

Help create more survivors. #CreateSurvivors



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