

Your heart probably is much older than you think

BY KAREN KAPLAN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

You may feel young at heart, but with apologies to Frank Sinatra, that's probably a fairy tale. A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the average American man has a heart that's 7.8 years "older" than his chronological age; for women, the comparable "heart age" is 5.4 years higher than her calendar age.

If the idea of a heart age sounds like a gimmick, that's because it is. The concept was developed by public health experts who work on the venerable Framingham Heart Study as a way to help regular folks understand their risk of having a heart attack, stroke, chest pain, peripheral artery disease or another heart-related condition, including death.

And it works. A clinical trial in Europe found that people who were told their heart age improved their heart health more than people who were told their absolute risk of developing cardiovascular disease. In that trial, those who learned their heart age were able to reduce it by 1.5 years over the course of a year, compared with a reduction of only 0.3 years for those who got the traditional risk information.

Hearts in the United States need all the help they can get. Nearly 800,000 Americans die of heart-related conditions each year, and their illnesses cost about \$320 billion annually, according to the American Heart Association.

So researchers from the CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention decided to estimate the heart age of American adults and see how those ages differed according to where they

live, how much education and money they have, and their racial and ethnic backgrounds.

They used data from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, which includes questions about cardiovascular disease every other year. Participants in the survey report their age, smoking status, body mass index, and whether they have diabetes or take medication to control their blood pressure.

The heart age calculator also requires a measure for a person's systolic blood pressure, which is the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats. The CDC researchers estimated this number based on other variables that were known.

Altogether, the researchers calculated the heart age of 236,101 men and 342,424 women between the ages of 30 and 74. None of them had heart disease or had suffered a heart attack or stroke.

After making statistical adjustments to match the age distribution of the U.S. population, the researchers calculated that the average chronological age of men in the study was 47.8 years, but their average heart age was 55.6 years. For the women, the average chronological age was 47.9 years and the average heart age was 53.3 years.

Put another way, 48.8 percent of men and 38.5 percent of women — an estimated 69.1 million Americans total — had a heart age that was at least five years older than their calendar age, according to the CDC report.

The older a person was, the bigger the gap between their chronological age and their heart age, the researchers wrote. However, the gap shrank as education and household income rose.

The heart age gap was smallest in Utah, where

men's hearts averaged 5.8 excess years and women's hearts averaged 2.8 additional years. At the other end of the spectrum was Mississippi, where the average excess heart age was 10.1 years for men and 9.1 years for women.

Nationwide, African-Americans had the highest heart ages, averaging 58.7 years for men and 58.9 for women. They were followed by Latinos (55.7 years for men and 53.3 for women), whites (55.3 years for men and 52.5 years for women) and people of other racial and ethnic groups (54.7 years for men and 52.3 years for women).

After taking age, education and income into account, the researchers calculated that the average heart age for black men was three years higher than for white men and four years higher than for Latinos. Among women, the average heart age for blacks was five years higher than for whites and seven years higher than for Latinas.

The results were published Tuesday in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Though you can't rewind your chronological age, you can reduce your heart age. For example, the researchers wrote, a 50-year-old man who smokes, has high blood pressure and is right on the border between being overweight and obese would have a heart age of 72. However, if he quits smoking and takes medication to get his blood pressure down to 120 mm Hg, he could shave 19 years off his heart age and bring it down to 53.

A woman with the same attributes could reduce her heart age from 74 to 51.

To calculate your heart age, try the online calculator at cdc.gov/heartdisease/heartage.htm.



2015 ELLSWORTH

SENIOR EXPO

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



FREE!

THURSDAY,

SEPT. 24

9AM-3PM

MOORE COMMUNITY CENTER

VENDORS • HEALTH SCREENINGS
INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

SPONSORED BY:

 **mainecoast**
memorial hospital


Jones, Kuriloff & Sargent, LLC
Attorneys and Counselors at Law

 **HOSPICE**
VOLUNTEERS
of Hancock County


FRISBIE
& ASSOCIATES

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT KELLY DONNELLY AT 990-8021
OR EMAIL EVENTS@BANGORDAILYNEWS.COM

Things to Do

BANGOR — Join local photographer Michele Benoit for a photo walk at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, in Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve, meeting at the Bangor Land Trust kiosk on Kit-tredge Road. Bring your camera and explore the landscapes and wildlife of this beautiful preserve. Benoit will share photography tips and point out great photo opportunities along the two-mile loop trail. For information, call Bangor Land Trust at 942-1010.

BANGOR — Penobscot County Conservation Association's 38th annual Bangor Gun Show, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13, at the Cross Insurance Center, 515 Main St. Admission is \$8; \$7 for current members of law enforcement, military and National Rifle Association with current identification. Age 12 and under are free with an adult. Join the NRA at the show and get free admission. Proceeds will fund college scholarships for wildlife conservation and wildlife law enforcement students at University of Maine and Unity College. For table information, call Charlie Rumsey at 941-8575.

BANGOR — Pedal the Penobscot Training Ride, led by 2015 celebrity rider Tim

Godaire, 5:20 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 3, starting in the parking lot next to Sea Dog Brewing Co. for an approximately 12-mile ride through Brewer, covering the last five miles of the Pedal the Penobscot courses. Godaire is doing a five-day Climate Ride from Bar Harbor to Boston. To help him reach his monetary goal for that ride, visit <http://bike.climateride.org>.

BAR HARBOR — Seventh annual Night Sky Festival, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sept. 10-14, Acadia National Park. Stargaze atop Cadillac Mountain with astronomers, take a nighttime boat cruise while listening to Wabanaki folklore, participate in night sky photography workshops and night hikes. For information, visit www.acadianight-skyfestival.org.

GRAND LAKE STREAM — Join Downeast Lakes Land Trust staff and volunteers to learn about geocaching, 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, meeting at Grand Lake Stream School on Water Street. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the "geocache" — a small container — hidden at a location in the Farm Cove Community Forest. Open to all ages, participants should come dressed in long pants and closed-toed shoes and be ready for

walking over uneven terrain. GPS and compasses provided, but feel free to bring your own. For information, call Downeast Lakes Land Trust at 796-2100 or email cbrown@downeast-lakes.org.

HERMON — The sixth annual Northern Maine Operation Game Thief Sporting Clays Fall Harvest Fun Shoot, 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, at Hermon Skeet Club, Black Stream Road. Register by Sept. 1 to be entered to win a \$250 Cabela's gift card. Maximum of 50 shooters. Entry fee of \$100 includes 100 target sporting clays and lunch. Lots of variations: standard, midi, mini, rabbits. Prizes, raffles, silent auction, Wall of Shame trailer on display, live auction, wardens on site. Bring your own shells with shot size 7½, 8 or 9. Eye and ear protection required. Register online at MaineOGT.org or call Peter Bartley at 745-6498.

RANGELEY — Fourth annual Rangeley Trail Town Festival celebrating the Appalachian Trail, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 5 and 6, at Haley Pond Park and Pond Street. Exhibits, games, vendors, music, food and more.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

MAINE ENERGY

CONTROLLER /ACCOUNTANT

Maine Energy, a family owned and operated fuel company is seeking the right individual for the position of controller/accountant.

This Person will be responsible for all aspects of finance administration and human resource for Maine Energy and its affiliated companies. Responsibilities include financial reporting; monthly closes, monitoring accounts receivable collections, account payable approval, monthly fuel and sales tax returns, supervision of office personal and a variety of other duties.

Qualifications for this job: Bachelor's degree in accounting, ability to work in a fast pace environment and processing solid computer skills especially in using Excel, Word and QuickBooks is a must.

Maine Energy offers competitive salary and benefits including health insurance and 401K.

Please forward Resume to: Rob Cort rcort@maineenergy.net
JOB LOCATION: Bangor, Maine