

[IMAGE]

Music to Your Heart

They say music can soothe the soul, but did you know it may also improve your heart health? Research presented at the 2009 European Society of Cardiology Congress in Barcelona, Spain suggests music therapy reduces blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety in patients with acute coronary syndrome - any of a collection of symptoms, such as chest pain, brought on by sudden reduced blood flow to the heart. Even more significantly, the researchers found that music therapy was also effective at reducing the incidence of future heart-related events, including the big one: sudden death.

All of the patients in the study had heart issues serious enough to necessitate *revascularization*, a surgical procedure designed to restore blood flow where it has been compromised or limited. That meant they were at risk for a future coronary event not only because of their heart health status, but also because the fear of a potential repeat surgery likely increased their stress and anxiety, which is never good for the heart.

Music to your heart - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark And what type of music did the patients listen to during the study? Classical music appeared to be the general preference, but the lead author of the study emphasizes that music therapy may actually have a negative effect if patients are forced to listen to music they don't like, suggesting that the type of music (within reason) is not as important as whether you enjoy listening to it and how it affects your overall mood and stress levels.

So, whether you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure, heart disease or a related heart condition, are at risk for any of the above, or just want to keep your cardiovascular system in the best shape possible (why wouldn't you?), charge up your iPod and let your favorite tunes lead you down the road to a lifetime of health and wellness.

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