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A positive outlook can be good for your health

A **NEGATIVE** attitude could be reflected in your health.

According to a Finnish study, pessimism appeared to be a strong risk factor in coronary heart disease (CHD). Researchers studied 2,267 Finnish men and women over 11 years and found the 121 people that died of heart disease had a gloomier approach to life and had been more pessimistic at the start of the study than the others.

It is believed this pessimism is linked to stress and the stress increases blood sugar levels and blood pressure which can lead to heart damage and disease.

THE clocks have gone back and whilst many look forward to long winter nights cosy by the fire, for many it brings about the onset of SAD. Often referred to as the winter blues, seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression linked to changes in seasons.

Symptoms include feelings of depression, changes in appetite, gaining weight, feeling overly tired and irritable with low energy levels.

It's more common in women and those living in countries with less sunlight. Although in Spain we enjoy more sun than the UK some people still suffer but there's things that can help.

Environment: Sitting in a cold dark office all day can enhance symptoms. Try to improve surroundings by opening curtains and blinds to let in as much natural light as possible, bring in a few bright home accessories and spend a few minutes outside soaking up the sun.

Alternative medicine: Some believe these can help such as St John's Wort, often used in the UK to help treat mild depression. Vitamin D supplements can also help if you don't get enough sun.

Eat right: Avoid processed and sugary food. Eat fresh fruit, vegetables and fish for essential nutrients that will boost your body and ward off depression.

This is one of a few studies highlighting the relationship between pessimism and mortality from CHD, but there have been numerous studies over the years stressing how optimism can improve your health.

An American study evaluated 839 people in the early 1960s, performing tests for optimism and pessimism. In those analysed 30 years later, tests show optimism was linked to longevity.

Dutch studies have reported similar results. In one, the researchers assessed over 500 men for their optimism who were free of cardiovascular disease and cancer in 1985. Over the next 15 years, researchers reported those who were more positive were 55 per cent less likely to die from cardiovascular disease than the pessimists, even after traditional risk factors were taken into account.