



Finding Solutions – Meet Dr. Sadiya Khan, MD, MSc

Sadiya Sana Khan is passionate about helping people prevent heart disease.

Early in her clinical training, she met a patient with advanced heart failure who was in the hospital for the third time in three months. “Every time she left the hospital, she was better, but then she was back within a few weeks,” Dr. Khan recalled. Each hospital stay came after the patient had gained weight. “This experience made me wonder,” Dr. Khan said. “There had to be a better way than waiting for heart failure to develop.”

Dr. Khan has been focused on the prevention of heart disease throughout her career. She is a preventive cardiologist and researcher at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. There, she works to understand the risk factors for heart disease. She is especially interested in women’s health and major life stages when weight can change dramatically, including pregnancy.

Dr. Khan is one of the lead researchers of the Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™ Study.

Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™ is a nationwide research effort led by the American Heart Association. Its goal is to understand the long-term health experiences of adults living with obesity or those who are overweight.

“The study is important because it is focused on people living with overweight and obesity. Our goal is to understand how changes in lifestyle, health habits and use of medications can be most successful to manage weight and improve health,” she said.

Dr. Khan has long been motivated by the team approach to improving medicine. “My long-term relationships with my patients continue to inspire me and guide me in how to center my research studies and prioritize what the most important questions are,” she said.

Dr. Khan is eager to work with patients toward long-term solutions for improved health. She is excited about the many advancements in the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease with growing awareness of how different health systems in the body are connected. Yet, she noted that gaps remain, especially in understanding which solutions work best for specific patients and what the long-term effects of treatment will be.

“There is an urgent need for research studies like Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™,” she said. The study:

- Explores how adults manage weight and health challenges
- Shows how specific ways of managing weight affect health over time
- Provides education and support for participants

Dr. Khan is most excited about learning how to create weight management plans that are personalized for each person. She expects that this research can take advantage of improved risk calculation tools and digital health resources that people can use at home.

“I am hopeful that the results of our study will help us to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach that we currently use,” she said, instead creating customizable strategies that will help people live healthier and longer lives, free from heart disease.