

Heart Disease in Women

Gender Matters: Heart Disease is Not Just a Man's Disease

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women.
- One out of every three women will develop heart disease.
- Heart disease affects women of all ages.
- Awareness of heart disease remains low among women and health care providers.
- Women are more likely to die from their first heart attack compared to men.
- Women are less likely to receive optimal therapies, interventions and rehabilitation compared to men.
- Almost 2/3 of women who die suddenly of heart disease had no previous symptoms.

Symptom Detection

Typical Symptoms in Women and Men

- Pain, pressure, squeezing, or a stabbing pain in the chest.
- Pain radiating to the neck, shoulder, back, arm, or jaw.
- Pounding heart, change in heart rhythm.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Heartburn, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain.
- Cold sweats, clammy skin, dizziness.



Unique Symptoms in Women

Women sometimes have atypical, non-specific and less severe symptoms of a heart attack.

- Sudden onset of weakness, shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, indigestion, fatigue, sleep disturbances, body aches, or overall feeling of illness.
- Unusual feeling or mild discomfort in the back, chest, arm, neck, or jaw.

Lifestyle Changes You Can Make

Lifestyle changes should be at the heart of any prevention or treatment plan. A heart-healthy lifestyle can slow the progression of heart disease and help prevent a heart attack.

Exercise regularly.

- 30-40 minutes most days of the week. This can be broken up into smaller segments.

Eat nutritious foods daily.

- At least five servings of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Replace saturated fats with healthier unsaturated fats like those in olive oil or canola oil, and eliminate trans fats.
- Add more whole grains, seafood, nuts, and beans to your diet.
- Avoid all tobacco exposure, including secondhand smoke.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Manage your stress.
- Monitor and control blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol levels.

Questions to ask your health care provider

- What is my cardiovascular risk level?
- What lifestyle changes will improve my heart health?
- Are there any tests I need to better evaluate my risks?

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Creating a world without heart and vascular disease