



It's a serious disease. Don't take chances.

Don't become or let someone you know become another statistic. Know the facts, the symptoms, and the risk factors. Take care of yourself and your heart. Others could be depending on you.

Facts that must be faced:

- ▶ Cardiovascular disease kills more women than men.
- ▶ Signs and symptoms of heart disease can be different in women.
- ▶ Many women who died suddenly from coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms.
- ▶ 1 in 2 women in the United States dies of heart attack or stroke.
- ▶ African-American women face a greater threat from heart disease than women of other races.
- ▶ Long-term use of hormone therapy may increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- ▶ For some diagnostic tests, men's and women's results differ in accuracy. Ask your doctor which diagnostic test would be best for you.
- ▶ Once a woman reaches menopause, her risks of heart disease and heart attack increase dramatically.

Learn more. Talk with your doctor.

Nothing replaces a discussion with your doctor or healthcare provider. In addition, you can search the Internet for information about "women and heart disease" to discuss with your healthcare provider.

Web sites to consider:

- ▶ The American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org
- ▶ The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
www.womenheart.org
- ▶ Speaking of Women's Health
www.speakingofwomenshealth.com
- ▶ The Heart Truth Campaign
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth

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A Woman's Guide to a Healthy Heart

Heart Disease - the #1 killer of American Women

The American Heart Association has called heart disease in women the "silent epidemic" because most Americans are still not aware of how common heart disease is in women.

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Increase your knowledge to save your heart.

Frequently, women put the needs of others before their own – even their own health.

Simple things like awareness and education can save a life.

Did you know that heart disease kills more women than any form of cancer, AIDS, domestic violence and stroke? Yet most women, and many doctors, may not recognize the early signs of heart disease in women, which are sometimes different from the signs for men.

Risk factors for heart disease:

- Family history of heart disease or stroke
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Being overweight
- Not eating a healthy diet
- Physical inactivity
- Being post menopausal
- High blood pressure and cholesterol

Lesser factors:

- Stress
- Depression
- Alcohol

Heart Attack Symptoms for Women

Would you recognize them?

Warning signs for women are different than they are for men – and they can be far more subtle. Not all heart attacks begin with sudden, crushing pain, as is often shown on TV or in the movies.

Every woman should know how to identify the symptoms of a heart attack:

- ▶ **Pain or pressure in chest, upper back, shoulders, arms, neck, or jaw.**
- ▶ **Indigestion or gas-like pain.**
- ▶ **Feeling breathless, often without chest pain of any kind.**
- ▶ **Unexplained fatigue, weakness, or dizziness.**
- ▶ **Flu-like symptoms – specifically nausea, clamminess, or cold sweats.**
- ▶ **Feeling of impending doom.**

If you even suspect these symptoms, call your doctor. Recognizing the warning signs, and getting help quickly, can save your life.

Take charge of your own health.

Remember, the care you want to give others depends on the care you give yourself!

Don't be afraid to call 911, especially if you are having more than one symptom. Do not attempt to drive yourself to the emergency room.

Medical personnel often attribute these symptoms in women to non-cardiac causes. If you have doubts that you are being diagnosed correctly, don't take chances. Ask more questions and see another doctor, if necessary.

Every woman can take action to improve her heart health.

This may mean slowing down enough to take proper care of your own health needs. It may mean getting exercise with a daily walk. Even the simplest steps can make a big difference. Aim for a healthy weight and adopt a healthier diet. Add one serving of fish each week. Add a fruit or vegetable to each meal. And if you smoke, quit today!



Know your numbers.

Talk to your doctor about your blood pressure, cholesterol (total, HDL, LDL, triglycerides), blood glucose, and BMI (body mass index).

Stop thinking of heart disease as a man's disease. And remember: Your risk for heart disease and other conditions may change as you age. So review your health regularly with your doctor. Stay informed.

Know Your Numbers:

	Good	See your doctor
Blood Pressure	<120/80 mm Hg	>140/90 mm Hg
Cholesterol: LDL-C	<100 mg/dl	>160 mg/dl
Cholesterol: HDL-C	>60 mg/dl	<40 mg/dl
Triglycerides	<150 mg/dl	>150 mg/dl
Blood Sugar	<100 mg/dl	100 mg/dl or higher
BMI (body mass index)	24 or less	>24