

BEING AWARE

It is important to be aware of the risk factors for heart disease and stroke, and to take the necessary steps to reduce your risk. By simply controlling one or more of your risk factors, you can add months and possibly years to your life!

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

Increasing Age - About 82 percent of people who die of coronary heart disease are 65 or older. At older ages, women who have heart attacks are more likely than men to die from them within a few weeks.

Gender - Men have a greater risk of heart attack than women do, and they have heart attacks earlier in life. Even after menopause, when women's death rate from heart disease increases, it's not as great as men's.

Hereditary (including Race) - Children of parents with heart disease are more likely to develop it themselves. African-Americans have more severe high blood pressure than Caucasians and a higher risk of heart disease. Heart disease risk is also higher among Mexican-Americans, American Indians, native Hawaiians and some Asian-Americans.

Modifiable Risk Factors

Tobacco Smoke - Smokers' risk of dying from coronary heart disease is 2-3 times that of nonsmokers. Exposure to other people's smoke increases the risk of heart disease even for nonsmokers.

High Blood Cholesterol - As blood cholesterol rises, so does risk of coronary heart disease. When other risk factors (such as high blood pressure and tobacco smoke) are present, this risk increases even more.

High Blood Pressure - High blood pressure increases the heart's workload, causing the heart to thicken and become stiffer. It also increases your risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure and congestive heart failure.

Physical Inactivity - A physically inactive lifestyle is a risk factor for coronary heart disease. Regular, moderate to vigorous physical activity helps prevent heart and blood vessel disease.

Obesity and Overweight - People who have excess body fat, especially if a lot of it is at the waist, are more likely to develop heart disease and stroke even if they have no other risk factors. Excess weight increases the heart's work. It also raises blood pressure, blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and lowers HDL (good) cholesterol levels.

Diabetes Mellitus - Diabetes seriously increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. Even when glucose levels are under control, diabetes increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, but the risks are even greater if blood sugar is not well controlled.

THE MORE RISK FACTORS YOU HAVE, THE GREATER YOUR CHANCE OF DEVELOPING CORONARY HEART DISEASE

WARNING SIGNS

HEART ATTACK

Early Signs & Symptoms

- Pressure, tightness, squeezing, or burning in the chest
- Intensifies with Anxiety
- Relieved by rest
- Becomes more frequent and increases in intensity with time

Late Signs & Symptoms

- Pain in chest, arm or throat
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Skin becomes sweaty and pale

DON'T WAIT!

Reasons for a delay in seeking treatment

- Poor understanding of mild symptoms
- People have been taught to "tough it out"
- Emergency Departments are seen as places for only very sick people
- Calling 9-1-1 is seen as ridiculous
- First responders are easily swayed by rationalizations of the patient
- Lack of appreciation for what the heart does for us

THERE IS A HUGE PRICE TO PAY FOR WAITING!

STROKE

Sudden Symptoms

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Vision trouble in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

USE THE F.A.S.T. TEST

Face - Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

Arms - Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Speech - Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

Time - If you observe any of these signs, it is time to get help. Call 9-1-1 and get to the nearest stroke center.

It is very important to take immediate action. If given between 3-4.5 hours since the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug called tPA may reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

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KEEPING YOUR HEART HEALTHY



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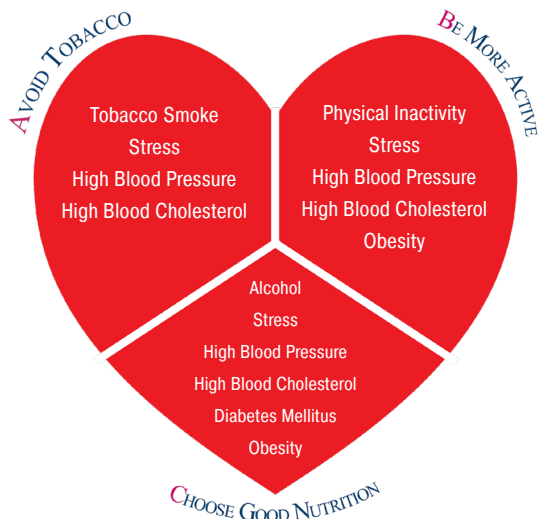
HEART DISEASE KILLS MORE PEOPLE THAN ANY OTHER DISEASE

However, there is a lot that you can do to keep your heart healthy. You can make lifestyle choices that can reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.

There are at least seven categories of lifestyle choices that can impact your odds of developing heart disease. The following is a list of areas you can control. It is never too late to make better health choices. All you need is a goal, a plan and the desire to live better.

Just the Facts

- Heart disease is the nation's No. 1 killer resulting in 600,000 deaths per year.
- About 2,600 people die every day of heart disease
- Cancer, the second largest killer, accounts for only half as many deaths.
- Heart disease causes death and disability every day.
- 84 percent of the damage to the heart occurs during the first two hours of a heart attack.
- Every 26 seconds an American will have a coronary event.
- Chance of developing coronary heart disease can be reduced.
- Early cardiac care is available.



SEVEN TIPS TO KEEP YOUR HEART HEALTHY

1. Manage Your Blood Pressure

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is extremely common, and if left untreated can affect the health of your heart. High blood pressure means the heart is pumping harder to move blood through the body. This can weaken blood vessels and damage major organs. In most people, High blood pressure can be controlled through diet, exercise, medication or a combination of all three. Controlling your blood pressure decreases your chance of heart disease and stroke.

2. Manage Your Cholesterol Levels

High blood cholesterol is a condition that greatly increases your chances of developing coronary heart disease and stroke. Extra cholesterol in the blood settles on the inner walls of the arteries, narrowing them and allowing less blood to pass through them to the heart. Aim for a total cholesterol below 200 mg/dL; LDL cholesterol below 130 mg/dL and HDL above 35 mg/dL. Adults should have their cholesterol measured at least once every five years starting at age 20. You may need more frequent testing if your numbers aren't optimal or if you have other risk factors for heart disease.

3. Control Your Blood Sugar

The presence of too much glucose in the blood can actually impair the normal functioning of the heart. More specifically, high blood glucose can keep blood vessels from dilating, obviously making it harder for blood and oxygen to flow to and from the heart. This effect can happen even with people who only have slightly high blood glucose levels and do not struggle with diabetes.

If your fasting blood sugar level is below 100, you are in the healthy range. If not, your results could indicate diabetes or prediabetes. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose (or blood sugar) that our bodies use for energy. Your body makes a hormone called insulin that acts like a carrier to take your energy into your cells.

When your body stops making insulin, or the insulin stops doing its job, your energy supply and blood sugars are no longer stable and serious health problems like diabetes can result. Over time, high levels of blood sugar can damage your heart and blood vessels to the brain.

4. Manage Your Diet and Weight

A poor diet often leads to obesity and can be very damaging to the heart and vascular system. Eating a balanced diet will help to keep your heart healthy. Diets low in saturated fat and high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fiber are associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. Making only a few sensible changes in your diet can also help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. You can start by limiting your salt intake.

5. Get Plenty of Exercise

You can benefit from as little as 60 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week. A sedentary lifestyle is bad for the entire cardiovascular system. The more active you are, the more you will benefit. Simply walking can lower your blood pressure, lower your cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.

6. Don't Smoke

Of all the things that you can do for your health, stopping smoking is at the top of the list. If you smoke, you are likely to develop heart disease earlier than you otherwise might. Smoking can raise your risk of heart and vascular diseases. Talk with your doctor about programs that can help you quit smoking. In addition, try to avoid second hand smoke.

7. Learn to Manage Stress

The effect of chronic stress on your mind, body and heart will increase risk factors like high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The more you can do to find healthy ways of managing stress, the better your life and heart will be. Learning how to manage stress, relax and cope with problems can improve your physical health.

