

TAKE ACTION NOW

Women and Heart Disease

Do Women Need to Worry About Heart Disease?

Many women think that they have a very low risk of heart disease. But heart disease is the leading cause of death among American women. Heart attacks kill 6 times more women than breast cancer does.

Are There Risk Factors That Only Women Have?

Anything that changes your hormones can raise your risk for heart disease. This includes medication that you take or surgery that you have, such as:

- Taking birth control pills
- Going through early menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy, for example
- Using hormone replacement therapy, or HRT, to help you through menopause

Let your health care professional know if you take birth control pills or HRT or if you have had a hysterectomy. Your health care professional can help you understand your risk of heart disease.



What Makes Heart Disease Different in Women?

Heart disease looks different in women than it does in men, which makes it harder to find during a checkup. This is why women should take charge of their heart health and ask their health care professional about heart disease.

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Provided as an educational resource by Merck



Symptoms of a Heart Attack in Women

For most women, having a heart attack feels more like getting the flu suddenly and feeling very weak. Here are some ways to know that you might be having a heart attack:

- Feeling pain in your arms, back, jaw, shoulders, or neck
- Having trouble with your breathing
- Feeling tired and weak
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Having an upset stomach or feeling like you might throw up
- Feeling anxious or dizzy or not being able to sleep
- Having pain or pressure in your chest or feeling like your chest is full or being squeezed

Talk, Test, Track

Talk to your health care professional about screening tests that are important to help manage your health and understand your risks. Ask what your goal levels should be and track results from your visits.

How Can I Prevent Heart Disease?

You can cut your risk of heart disease by making some changes in your daily life. Women respond quite well to lifestyle changes. Try taking these steps:

- Have your blood pressure checked on a regular basis.
- If you smoke, quit.
- Have your blood sugar checked.
- Know your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Find healthy ways to deal with stress.

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My Numbers	Goal Numbers and Target Dates
_____ Fasting blood sugar	<input type="text"/> / /
_____ Weight	<input type="text"/> / /
_____ Waist measurement	<input type="text"/> / /
_____ HDL (good) cholesterol	<input type="text"/> / /
_____ LDL (bad) cholesterol	<input type="text"/> / /
_____ Triglycerides	<input type="text"/> / /

