

Women's Health & Heart Disease

婦女與心臟病



Although many people think of heart disease as a men's problem, heart disease in women is *not* uncommon. In fact, did you know that heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States? Women with diabetes are three to four times more likely than men to develop heart disease. Diabetes nearly doubles the risk of a second heart attack in women. While heart disease can occur in pre-menopausal women, the risk increases dramatically in post-menopausal women.

The most common cause of heart disease is narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart itself. This condition, called coronary artery disease (CAD), develops slowly over time. CAD is the major reason people have heart attacks. Other unusual causes of heart attacks in women include coronary spasms and coronary artery dissections.

Signs and Symptoms of Heart Disease in Women:

The most common signs of a heart attack are:

MAIN SIGN:

- Mild or strong pain or discomfort in the center of the chest that can either go away quickly and then come back or last more than a few minutes.

OTHER SIGNS:

- Shortness of breath
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting
- Feeling faint or woozy
- Breaking out in a cold sweat

SIGNS SPECIFIC TO WOMEN

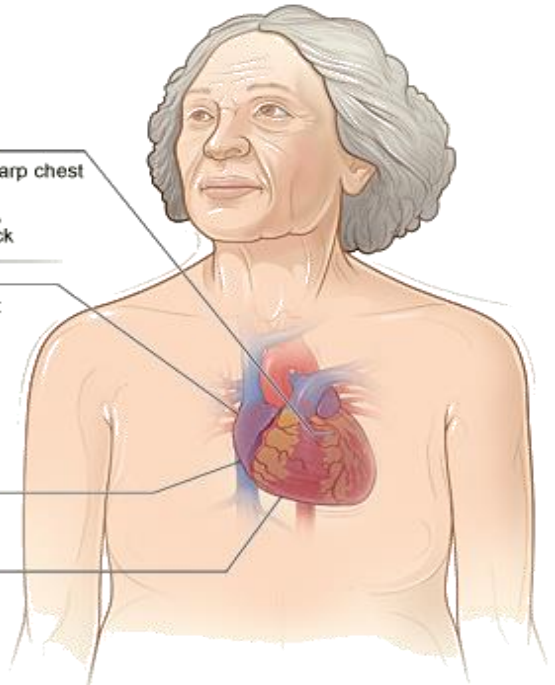
- Unexplained fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Heart flutters
- Feeling of pressure in the lower chest

Coronary heart disease
 Angina (dull/heavy to sharp chest pain or discomfort)
 Pain in neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen or back

Heart attack
 Chest pain or discomfort
 Upper back or neck pain
 Indigestion
 Heartburn
 Nausea and vomiting
 Extreme fatigue
 Upper body discomfort
 Shortness of breath

Arrhythmia
 Fluttering feelings (palpitations)

Heart failure
 Shortness of breath
 Fatigue
 Swelling in feet, ankles, legs, and abdomen.



Heart Disease & Women

As you can see, symptoms specific to women's heart disease are very mild and often resemble other conditions. As a result, women may not think they have heart disease and may not visit the doctor to get a proper diagnosis. Although a women's likelihood of getting heart disease increase as she gets older, women of all ages should be proactive and take steps to prevent it by practicing healthy lifestyle habits.

What Should I Do to Reduce My Risk?

The risk of heart disease increases as you age, especially for men over age 45 or women over age 55. Family history also increases your risk.

Fortunately, there are many things you can do reduce your chances of getting heart disease. You should

- Exercise regularly
- Stop smoking
- Get tested for diabetes and if you have it, keep it under control
- Know your blood pressure and keep it under control
- Know your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and keep them under control
- Eat a lot of fruits and vegetables
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce Stress
- Get appropriate medical test
- Don't feel hesitate to get treatment help if you feel something is wrong!!

How Is Heart Disease Diagnosed?

EKG (Electrocardiogram) is a simple, painless test that detects and records the heart's electrical activity.

Stress Testing can show possible signs and symptoms of coronary heart disease. Imaging stress test can show how well the blood is flowing in your heart and how well your heart pumps blood when it is beating.

Echocardiography uses sound waves to create a moving picture of your heart.

Blood Tests check the levels of certain fats, cholesterol, sugar, and proteins in your blood. Abnormal levels may be a sign that you're at risk for coronary heart disease.

Coronary Angiography and Cardiac Catheterization

This test uses dye and special x rays to look inside your coronary arteries. Coronary angiography detects blockages in the coronary arteries

