

# MANAGING CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE THROUGH DIET AND EXERCISE

In partnership with POTENTRx

January 2015

## What is Coronary Artery Disease?

Coronary Artery Disease is caused by the build up of plaque, a waxy substance, in the arteries leading from your heart to the rest of your body. Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood to the body allowing normal, every day functions to take place. Excessive plaque build up decreases blood flow and causes the arteries to harden, known as atherosclerosis, and in some cases eventually rupture.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Q: What are the risks of having CAD?

A: Having CAD places you at a higher risk for heart attacks, heart failure, and arrhythmias (irregular heart beats).

### Q: How do I determine if I have CAD?

A: If you begin to experience shortness of breath, chest pain, or have had a heart attack you should consult your physician for further testing. Be aware chest pain can present as pressure or a squeezing sensation in the chest, arms, shoulders, neck, or jaw. To confirm a diagnosis of CAD you can undergo tests such as an ECG, stress testing, blood tests, or echocardiograms. Your healthcare provider will determine the best test for you.

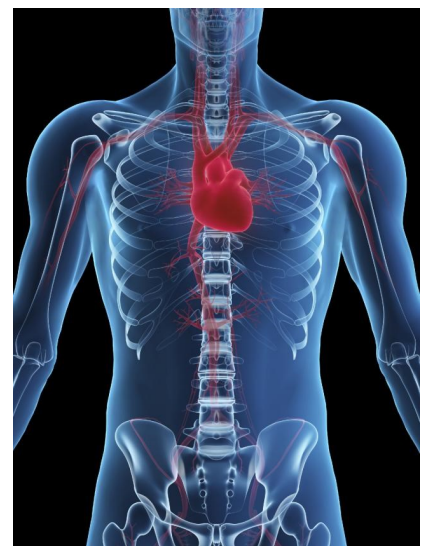
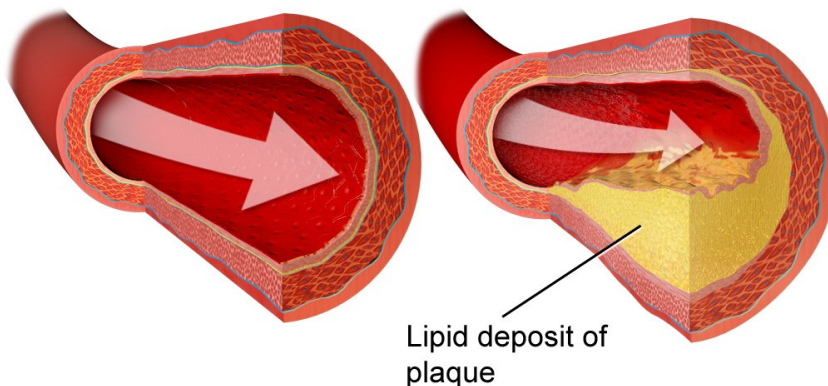
### Q: Does having CAD mean I will have a heart attack?

A: No; if you are determined to have CAD, it does not mean you will have a heart attack. You are at an increased risk but there are preventative measures that can be taken, as well as ways to combat further plaque build up.

***CAD is the #1 killer of men and women in the United States; it can account for 1 out of 4 deaths annually.***

Normal Artery

Narrowing of Artery





## Factors of CAD

There is no one, definite cause of coronary artery disease, but the following are known to increase risk for developing CAD:

### Modifiable Risk Factors

Obesity or being overweight, smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, stress, lack of physical activity, and Type II Diabetes.

### Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

Family history of early heart disease and diabetes, age, ethnicity, and gender.

## What Can Exercise Do For Preventing CAD?

Studies show that those who engage in regular exercise are less likely to develop CAD, and if they do develop CAD, the onset is delayed and less severe. Regular exercise combats known factors that increase the risk for developing CAD, thus decreasing the risk for developing CAD. For example, regular aerobic exercise can lower blood pressure, a primary risk factor, 4 to 9 mm Hg, which translates to a 10-20% decrease in risk of having a heart attack. Exercise is also known to decrease LDL, or the “bad cholesterol”, while simultaneously increasing HDL, or the “good cholesterol”. Regular exercise also improves the body’s ability to uptake and utilize oxygen; increased utilization of oxygen allows one to go about their daily activity with less fatigue.

## What Can Lifestyle Changes Do for Decreasing your Risk for CAD?

There are many proven and recommended lifestyle changes to lower your risk of developing CAD— the primary being reduced body weight. Regular exercise and a healthy diet can significantly aid in weight loss/maintenance. A diet to prevent CAD should be low in saturated and trans fats; this can be achieved by avoiding baked goods with butter, as well as deep fried and processed foods. The diet should also be low in salt and sugar, while high in fiber and in omega-3 fatty acids, which can be found in foods such as fish and olive oil. For those who enjoy their one cocktail with dinner, you may continue doing so! Research shows that one glass of wine, beer, or a small amount of hard liquor can increase your HDL or “good” cholesterol levels. The key is to have only one though!

