

Women and Heart Disease

Did you know heart disease continues to be a leading cause of death in women? Heart disease affects women of all walks of life and age. The good news is that by becoming more aware of any risk factors you may have that can lead to heart disease, you have the ability to make healthy changes.

Facts

- Women do have heart attacks.
- Women may experience different symptoms compared to men.
- Obesity among women is higher than ever, as is a lack of regular exercise.
- Women who smoke are at a higher risk for having a heart attack compared to non-smokers.
- Women tend to wait longer to seek medical attention, which puts them at risk for serious complications.
- Women who are diabetic are more at risk for developing heart disease.

Good News

- Women appear to benefit greatly by making lifestyle changes such as:
- Change your eating habits to include whole grains, vegetables, increased fiber, more fish and less saturated fats.
- Regular exercise not only helps with weight loss, but it also helps to stabilize your blood pressure, increase your HDL (good cholesterol), lower your LDL (bad cholesterol), have a more stable blood sugar, and also helps to manage stress.
- Know some of the symptoms of a heart attack which will allow you to seek help sooner rather than later.

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Symptoms

Not everyone gets severe chest pain when having a heart attack or angina. Women may have very vague symptoms they do not recognize as angina or the possibility they could be having a heart attack.

Symptoms may include:

- Pain in your arms, shoulder, neck, jaw, back or in the pit of your stomach
- Vague chest fullness or pressure
- General complaints of shortness of breath
- Loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting, heartburn
- Cold sweats, dizziness
- Unusual fatigue or weakness
- Difficulty sleeping
- The feeling that something is just not right, feeling anxious

The key is for you to recognize these symptoms as soon as possible and to seek medical attention before you actually have a heart attack. The longer you wait, the more at risk you are for losing heart muscle!

If you experience any of the symptoms listed above, call your physician or call 911. Do not wait.