

THE heart TRUTH



Women &
Heart Disease



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health



National Heart
Lung and Blood Institute
People Science Health



Welcome

heart DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN



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DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN

A National Campaign

- To help women understand their risk of heart disease and take action
- Especially women ages 40 to 60
- Partnership of many groups
- Red Dress—the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness



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DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN

Today's Session Will Cover

- Why women need to know about heart disease
- What heart disease is
- Risk factors
- Talking to your doctor
- Taking action
- Surviving a heart attack
- Resources
- Getting on the road to heart health



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DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN

The Heart Truth

- Heart disease is the #1 killer of American women—no matter what their race or ethnicity
- Heart disease kills 1 of every 4 American women
- Heart disease can permanently damage your heart—and your life



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DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN

The Heart Truth

- Heart disease is a “now” problem
- “Later” may be too late



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What Is Heart Disease?

- Heart doesn't get enough nutrient-rich blood
- Chronic—develops over years
- Atherosclerosis—arteries harden as cholesterol, fat, and other substances build up in artery walls
- Blockage can result in heart attack



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No Quick Fix

- Not “fixed” by surgery or procedures, such as bypass and angioplasty
- Worsens if not treated—leads to disability or death



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Good News

- Heart disease can be prevented or controlled
- Treatment includes lifestyle changes and, if needed, medication



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Why Me? Why Now?

- Risk rises ages 40–60
 - Estrogen level drops during menopause
- Risk factors
 - Smoking
 - High blood pressure
 - High blood cholesterol
 - Overweight/obesity
 - Physical inactivity
 - Diabetes
 - Family history of early heart disease
 - Age (55 and older for women)



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Heart Disease Risk Factors

- Multiply their effects
- Same lifestyle steps prevent/control many of the risk factors



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Have a Heart-to-Heart

- Ask your doctor about your risk of heart disease
- Draw up a list of questions before your visit
- Write down or tape record what the doctor says
- Tell your doctor your lifestyle behaviors, such as smoking or being physically inactive



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Key Tests for Heart Disease Risk

- Blood pressure
- Blood cholesterol
- Fasting plasma glucose (diabetes test)
- Body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference
- Electrocardiogram
- Stress test



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Why Women Don't Take Action Against Heart Disease

- They don't put their health as a top priority
- They think they're not old enough to be at risk
- They feel too busy to make changes in their lives
- They're already feeling stressed
- They're tired



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How To Lower Heart Disease Risk

- Begin today
- Be physically active—30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most days of the week
- Follow a healthy eating plan
 - Low in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol and moderate in total fat
 - Limit salt and sodium
 - If you drink alcoholic beverages, have no more than one a day



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How To Lower Heart Disease Risk

- Maintain a healthy weight
 - Balance calories taken in with those used up in physical activity
- Stop smoking
- Manage diabetes
- Take medication, if prescribed



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Heart Attack Warning Signs

- Chest discomfort
 - Usually in the center of the chest
 - Lasts for more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back
 - Can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body, including pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach



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Heart Attack Warning Signs

- Shortness of breath, with or without chest discomfort
- Other symptoms, such as breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness



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To Survive a Heart Attack

- Call 9-1-1 within minutes—5 minutes at most
- Emergency medical personnel will begin treatment at once
- Don't drive yourself to the hospital
- Uncertainty is normal—don't be embarrassed by a false alarm
- Plan ahead
- Learn the warning signs



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Resources for a Healthy Heart

- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
 - www.hearttruth.gov
- American Heart Association
Go Red for Women
 - www.americanheart.org
- Office on Women's Health, DHHS
National Women's Health Information Center
 - www.womenshealth.gov
- WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
 - www.womenheart.org



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It All Begins With You

- Take one step at a time
- Replace unhealthy habits with healthier ones
- Eat for heart health
- Remember that calories count
- Start walking—try 10 minutes and add time gradually to get 30 minutes a day



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How To Keep Going

- View changes as new lifestyle, not quick fixes
- Set realistic goals
- Buddy up
- Don't worry about a slip
- Reward your success
- Be your own advocate—ask questions and seek information



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DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN

The Heart Truth

- It's up to you to protect your heart health—start today!