

Women Heart Disease

Heart disease is the number one killer of women. Learn how to protect yourself or someone you love.

Start healthy habits now.

Research indicates that women who lead a healthy lifestyle before the age of 50 have a better chance of avoiding heart disease and the conditions that increase the risk of it—such as diabetes and hypertension.³



Don't smoke.

Cigarette smoking can increase your risk of cardiovascular disease by two to four times.

Get your checkup.

Some factors that increase your risk for heart disease—including high cholesterol—have no symptoms. Get regular checkups that include a blood cholesterol test. Everyone should have their cholesterol checked annually starting at age 20.²



Brush your teeth.

The bacteria that grow in your mouth and cause gum disease may double your risk for a heart attack. Regular brushing and flossing can sweeten your breath and improve your health.⁹



Drink responsibly.

Drinking alcohol in moderation—particularly wine—can reduce your risk of dying from heart disease by 25 percent. For women, moderation means just one drink per day.



Have sex, but be safe.

Research suggests that people who have sex at least twice a week are less likely to develop heart disease.⁶ But proceed with caution and a condom. A recent study found a tie between human papillomavirus (HPV)—a sexually transmitted infection—and heart disease.⁷

Choose your birth control wisely.

Birth control pills can increase your risk of a heart attack and blood clots. Some types of the pill have been shown to increase the risk of blood clots by up to 65 percent over other formulas, especially in women who have a high BMI or those who smoke.⁸

Skip the soda.

Studies have shown that women who drink two or more sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda per day have a higher risk of heart disease.⁴



Relax!

Prolonged exposure to the stress hormone cortisol can damage your arterial linings, making it harder for your heart to do its job.

Stay active.

Your heart needs regular workouts in order to keep it healthy, even if you have a healthy BMI. As little as 30 minutes of moderate activity per day can reduce your risk for heart disease.⁵



Your heart works hard. Every day, it beats approximately 100,000 times and pumps around 2,000 gallons of blood. That's enough to fill about four bathtubs.



Your heart produces plenty of energy. The pumping motion of your heart creates enough energy in one day to drive a truck 20 miles.



A broken heart is a real condition where high levels of stress from painful life events can cause actual chest pain, a disruption of the heart rhythm and weakness.



Women have a 15 percent greater chance of having a heart attack on a Monday than any other day of the week, particularly women under the age of 50.

1 Evans, Christine; I Don't Like Mondays, BMJ 2000; 320

2 The US Department of Health and Human Services, hhs.gov

3 Goredforwomen.org

4 American Heart Association, heart.org

5 The Centers for Disease Control, CDC.gov

6 Hall, Susan; Sexual Activity, Erectile Dysfunction and Incident of Cardiovascular Events, American Journal of Cardiology, Jan. 2010

7 Kuo HK, Fujise K; Human Papillomavirus and Cardiovascular Disease Among US Women In The National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey, 2003-2006. Journal of American College of Cardiology; 2011

8 Gronic, Naomi; Drospirenone-Containing Contraceptives Linked To Higher Risk Of Blood Clots, Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ), Nov. 2011

9 Demmer, Ryan, T; Desvarieux, Moise; Periodontal Infections and Cardiovascular Disease, Journal of the American Dental Association, Oct. 2006