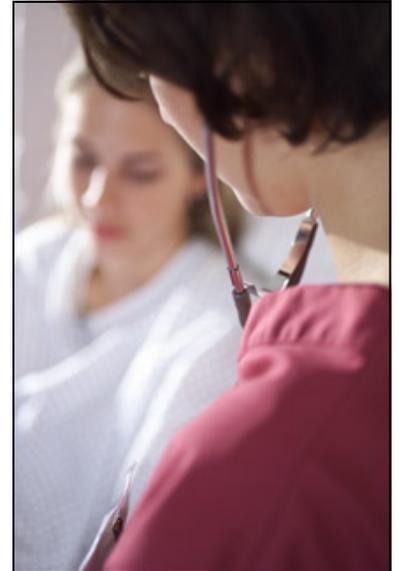


Women and Heart Disease

"Heart Disease isn't just a man's disease"

Overview

- Heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases are leading causes of death for postmenopausal women.
- **Coronary heart disease**, which causes heart attack, is actually the leading cause of death for American women.
- Many women view breast cancer as more of a threat.
- However, nearly **twice** as many women in the U.S die of heart disease and stroke than from all forms of cancer.
- It is now known that heart attack symptoms in women can be **different** than those experienced by men.
- Many women experiencing a heart attack may not know the symptoms they have are due to a heart attack.
- Women tend to feel a burning sensation in their upper abdomen and may experience lightheadedness, an upset stomach and sweating. But, because the typical pain signifying a heart attack (pain felt in the left half of the chest) often doesn't occur in women, **many ignore** the other symptoms they experience.



Before menopause, women appear to be partly protected from coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke by the hormone estrogen.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease & Stroke

Non-modifiable Risk Factors

Increasing age	Heart disease and stroke begins to rise and continues rising with age.
Sex (gender)	Men have a greater risk of heart attack than women, and have attacks earlier in life.
Heredity (family history)	Both genders are more likely to develop heart disease or stroke if a close blood relative has had them.
Previous heart attack or stroke or TIA	Women who have had a heart attack are at a much higher risk of having a heart attack when compared with women who have never had one.

Modifiable Risk Factors

- Tobacco smoke
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity and overweight
- Diabetes mellitus

Other Risk Factors:
High triglyceride levels
Excessive alcohol intake

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