

Heart Disease is NOT Just a Man's Disease,

Heart Disease is the “NUMBER 1 KILLER OF WOMEN.”

American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association national statistics show nearly 60% of women's first symptom of heart disease is death.

“Most women believe their biggest health threat is breast cancer. We need to make sure women understand the risk of death associated with heart disease. Did you know that heart disease kills six times as many women each year as breast cancer? We need to shout this from the roof tops,” said Kathryn Cramer, cardiovascular division manager at Memorial Hospital in Belleville. “We want to make sure women are informed about the signs and symptoms for women.”

According to Dr. Hatim Mahmood, a cardiologist on Memorial's medical staff, “Heart disease symptoms are usually milder in women. Women may only exhibit shortness of breath or fatigue and they expect crushing chest pain radiating to the left arm and most do not realize shortness of breath and fatigue may be their only symptom. Women need to be made aware that nearly 60% of women's first symptom of heart disease is death.”

“Not all women with these symptoms have heart disease, but all women with 2 or more of the below risk factors or who have new onset of fatigue or shortness of breath should be screened.”

Below see Risk factors for women.

Are You at Risk for Heart Disease?

Risk Factors include:

<input type="checkbox"/>	FAMILY HISTORY	Your father or brother under age 55 or your mother or sister under age 65 has had a heart attack, stroke, angioplasty or bypass surgery.
<input type="checkbox"/>	OLDER AGE	You are over 55 years old. (After age 65, the death rate increases sharply for women.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SMOKING	Either you smoke or you are exposed to secondhand smoke every day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE	Your blood pressure is over 135/85 mm Hg or you have been told that you have high blood pressure. Optimal blood pressure is 120/80 mm Hg. Drug therapy is indicated when blood pressure is >140/90 mm Hg, or an even lower blood pressure in the setting of chronic kidney disease or diabetes (> 130/90 mm Hg). After age 45, 60% of Caucasian women and 79% of African-American women have high blood pressure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	PHYSICAL INACTIVITY	You do not exercise for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, like taking a brisk walk, on most days. For weight control, women need to exercise with 60-90 minutes of a moderate-intensity activity most days. 70% of American women don't exercise regularly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	DIABETES	You have been told that you have diabetes or take medicine to

		help control your blood sugar. After age 45, diabetes affects many more women than men. If diabetic, aim to achieve an HbA1c < 7%.
<input type="checkbox"/>	BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS (LIPIDS)	<p>Your HDL (High Density Lipo-protein or "good" cholesterol) is less than 50mg/dL. LDL Goals are dependent upon risk</p> <p>The following levels of lipids and lipoproteins in women should be encouraged through lifestyle approaches: LDL-C<100mg/dL; HDL-C>50mg/dL; triglycerides <150mg/dL; and non-HDL-C (total cholesterol minus HDL cholesterol) <130 mg/dL. If a woman is at high risk or has hypercholesterolemia, intake of saturated fat should be <7% and cholesterol intake <200 mg/d. For diabetic women, LDL<100. For vascular disease and very high risk women, LDL<70. HDL of 60 mg/dL is considered cardio-protective. You can raise your HDL by taking in 2-3T of olive oil daily, quitting smoking, getting regular aerobic exercise and maintaining a healthy weight.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	OVERWEIGHT	You are 20 pounds or more overweight. (More than 1/3 of American women are more than 20 pounds overweight.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	METABOLIC SYNDROME	<p>Having at least three of a cluster of symptoms that are listed below places you at risk</p> <p>High blood sugar >100 mg/dL after fasting</p> <p>High triglycerides - at least 150 mg/dL</p> <p>Low HDL (<50 mg/dL in women)</p> <p>Blood pressure of 130/85 or higher</p> <p>Waist >35 inches. (Waist measurement of 35 inches or more or waist-to-hip ratio greater than 0.80 is a predictor of high triglycerides and low HDL levels)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	PREMATURE MENOPAUSE	Either natural or through surgery, early menopause - before the age of 40 - is associated with increased risk for cardiovascular disease.
<input type="checkbox"/>	BIRTH CONTROL PILLS. When combined with regular exposure to cigarette smoke,	taking birth control pills greatly increases risk of heart attack and stroke, especially after age 35.
<input type="checkbox"/>	STRESS	You have a high demand/low control job with sustained high levels of stress. Stress is a normal part of life. How you cope with stress can affect your heart.
<input type="checkbox"/>	UNHEALTHY DIET	<p>A healthy diet consists of eating fruits, vegetables and whole-grain high-fiber foods (aim for 5 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of whole fruit daily); eating fish, especially oily fish*, at least twice a week; limiting saturated fat to < 10% of energy, and if possible to <7%, cholesterol to <300 mg/dL; limiting alcohol intake to no more than 1 drink per day; limiting sodium intake to <2.3 g/d (approximately 1 tsp salt). avoiding all trans-fatty acids (listed as "hydrogenated oil" in the ingredients section).</p>

* Pregnant and lactating women should avoid eating fish potentially high in methylmercury Check EPA and USFDA websites for updates and advisories.

Women with two or more risk factors should contact their physicians and request a cardiac screening examination.

Other Numbers you should be aware of and discuss with your physician:

Total Cholesterol: <200 mg/dL
LDL "Bad" Cholesterol: <100 mg/dL
 High: 160-189 mg/dL
 Very High: 190 mg/dL and above
HDL ("Good") Cholesterol: 50 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides: <150 mg/dL
Blood pressure: <120/80 mmHg
Fasting Glucose: <100 mg/dL
Body Mass Index (BMI): <25
Waist Circumference: <35 inches