

RISK FACTORS

A woman's overall risk of heart disease or stroke is determined by all of her risk factors. You can control some of these risk factors, but not all of them. To prevent and reduce your risk of heart disease:

- **Don't smoke**
- **Keep a healthy body weight**
- **Be physically active**, aim for 30 minutes of exercise 5 days a week (brisk walking, dancing)
- **Keep a healthy blood pressure** by increasing physical activity, weight loss, reducing salt and alcohol consumption
- **Eat a healthy diet** lower in fat, higher in fibre, including lots of fresh fruit and vegetables
- **Use any prescribed medications** to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

It can be intimidating to get the information you need from your doctor. You might feel that they are too busy to listen to everything you have to say, or you may not understand some of the things they tell you. But your doctor is here to help you, and wants to make sure you remain healthy.

Take your time. Take a deep breath. If you don't understand something the doctor is saying, ask them to explain it again. It can help to bring a list of questions with you, so you don't forget anything you wanted to talk about.

Below is a list of questions that you may want to ask your doctor. Bring it with you the next time you have an appointment. It may also be helpful to bring a notebook and a pen so that you can write down the doctor's response to your questions.

- What is my risk for heart disease and stroke?**
- Is my blood pressure normal?**
- Is my cholesterol good?**
- Do I need to lose weight?**

- Am I at risk for diabetes?**
- What can you do to help me quit smoking?**
- How much physical activity per week do I need to protect my heart?**
- What should I be eating or avoiding in my diet to keep my heart healthy?**

(for more questions, see our website)

For further information please visit our website:

www.whhionline.ca

Follow us on facebook:



Other useful information:

www.heartandstroke.ca

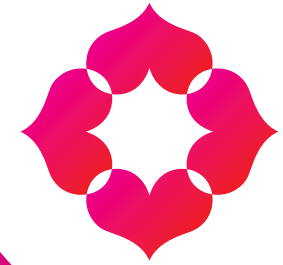
www.thehearttruth.ca

For an appointment, call or email:

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Women's
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WOMEN
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WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE

Heart disease is a leading cause of death for Canadian women, and yet many are not aware of this threat.

In fact, most Canadian women have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Women who have diabetes, come from certain ethnic backgrounds or are menopausal are even more at risk. It is important for every woman to know about their risk factors and recognize the warning signs for heart disease so that you can prevent and manage them.

WOMEN'S HEART DISEASE SYMPTOMS

In the past, it was believed that women had different warning signals than men. This may not be the case. Both women and men may experience typical or non-typical symptoms such as nausea, sweating, pain in the arm, throat, jaw or pain that is unusual. However, women may describe their pain differently than men.

What can women do?

Be an advocate for your health and trust your instincts. If you know your symptoms are different or you just don't feel right, be sure you tell your doctor and ask questions. Tell your doctor about all symptoms, even if they seem strange or embarrassing. The more

information your doctor has, the easier it will be to put the puzzle pieces together. And if your symptoms come on suddenly or you experience the following heart attack symptoms, do not be embarrassed to call 911 immediately. Thousands of Canadians die from heart attacks every year because they don't get medical treatment quickly enough. Learn to recognize the signals of a heart attack so you can react quickly.

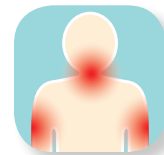
WOMEN'S HEART DISEASE WARNING SIGNS

Women's heart disease often begins with warning signs. Women may complain of fatigue, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, sleep disturbances or feeling like they are "slowing down" for a period of time before they have a heart event. Their symptoms can be vague and as a result, women are less likely to seek medical attention.



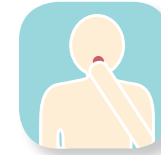
PAIN

- sudden discomfort or pain that does not go away with rest
 - pain that may be in the chest, neck, jaw, shoulder, arms or back or
 - pain that may feel like burning, squeezing, heaviness, tightness or pressure
- in women, pain may be more vague
- chest pain or discomfort that is brought on with exertion and goes away with rest



SHORTNESS OF BREATH

Difficulty breathing



NAUSEA

- indigestion
- vomiting



SWEATING

Cool, clammy skin



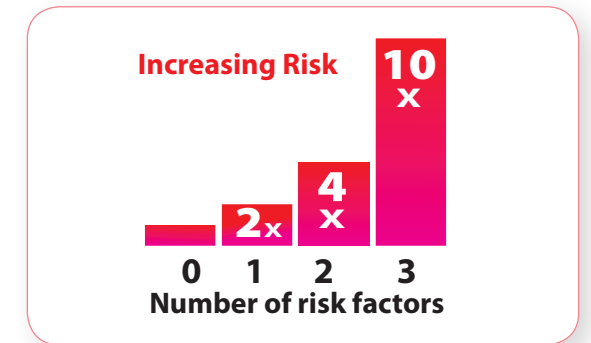
LIGHTEADEDNESS

If you are experiencing any of these signs, you should:

- CALL 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately, or have someone call for you.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers near the phone at all times.
- Stop all activity and sit or lie down, in whatever position is most comfortable.
- If you take nitroglycerin, take your normal dosage.
- If you are experiencing chest pain, chew and swallow one adult 325 mg Aspirin tablet or two 80 mg tablets.
- Pain medicines such as Tylenol or Advil do not work the same way as Aspirin and therefore will not help in the emergency situation described above.
- Rest comfortably and wait for Urgences-santé to arrive

HEART DISEASE PREVENTION

The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk. Many women don't realize that their risk for heart disease significantly increases based on the number of risk factors they have. This chart shows the dramatic rise in the level of heart disease risk for each added risk factor.



Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (2006)

Risk factors that cause heart disease that you can do something about are:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High blood cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Being overweight
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Stress

Risk factors you can't control:

Age, gender, family history, ethnicity