

Women Can Also Be At Risk Of Heart Disease

Christine D. deSocarraz, M.D.

Heart disease has generally been considered a disease of men. In truth, one in three American women dies of heart disease. It is the number one killer of women.

One in 14 women between the ages of 45 and 64 has heart disease, and the number doubles to one in seven over age 65.

When a heart attack occurs, women's symptoms are typically different from men's. While women's symptoms may include chest pain or pressure, other symptoms may not appear to be related to the heart. The Mayo Clinic lists the following possible symptoms:

- Neck, shoulder, upper back or abdominal discomfort;
- Shortness of breath;
- Nausea or vomiting;
- Sweating;
- Lightheadedness or dizziness;
- Unusual fatigue.

Fortunately, there are a number of things you can do to reduce your risk of a heart attack, and they revolve around leading a healthy lifestyle.

- Stop smoking;
 - Keep your blood pressure under control;
 - Keep your weight within accepted guidelines for your height and build;
 - Get plenty of exercise—at least 30 minutes a day of moderately intense physical activity, such as walking;
 - Eat a healthy diet, rich in fruits and vegetables;
 - Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
- As with men, controlling cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar are also important.
- There is some evidence that a daily dose of aspirin may help. Women should take a full adult dose instead of the child's dose recommended for men.

Your physician can recommend specific ways to be healthier and, if necessary, prescribe medication to control cholesterol, blood pressure and other factors. Taking action is the key to better heart health for women and men alike.

The office of Christine D. deSocarraz, M.D. is located at 2501 W. Illinois, Suite E., Midland, Texas 79701 The phone number is 620-9919.