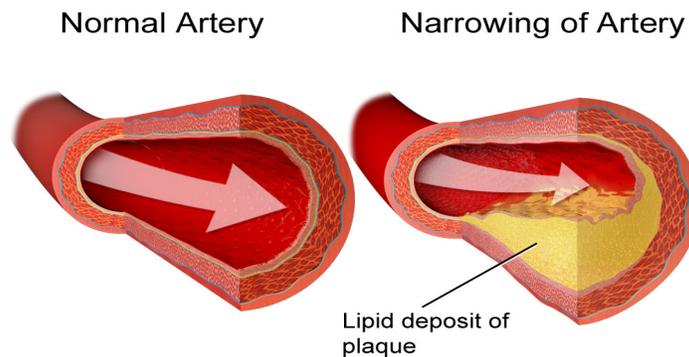


Heart Disease

The term “Heart Disease” refers to several types of heart conditions. About 600,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year, which is every 1 in 4 deaths. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women.

The most common cause of heart disease is narrowing or blockage of the coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart itself. This is called coronary artery disease and happens slowly over time. It's the major reason people have heart attacks.

Other kinds of heart problems may happen to the valves in the heart, or the heart may not pump well and cause heart failure.



Coronary Artery Disease

Are you at risk?

Anyone can develop heart disease. About half of all Americans have at least one of these three key risk factors:

- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ High LDL cholesterol
- ▶ Smoking

Other risk factors include:

- ▶ Family history of heart disease
- ▶ Unhealthy diet
- ▶ Being overweight or obese
- ▶ Lack of exercise
- ▶ Excessive alcohol use
- ▶ Diabetes

Signs and Symptoms of Coronary Artery Disease

The symptoms vary depending on the type of heart disease. Symptoms may be very noticeable, but sometimes you can have the disease and not have any symptoms. This is especially true in the early stages of heart disease. For many people, chest discomfort or heart attack is the first sign.

Symptoms include:

- ▶ Chest pain or discomfort (angina) is the most common symptom. You feel this pain when the heart is not getting enough blood or oxygen. It may feel heavy or like someone is squeezing your heart. You may feel it under your breast bone, but also in your neck, arms, stomach, or upper back.
- ▶ The pain usually occurs with activity or emotion, and goes away with rest or a medicine called nitroglycerin.
- ▶ Shortness of breath and fatigue with activity

Heart Attack

Coronary Artery Disease is the main cause of heart attack. If you have a heart attack, you are more likely to survive if you know the signs and symptoms:

- ▶ Chest pain or discomfort that doesn't go away after a few minutes
- ▶ Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck or back
- ▶ Weakness, light-headedness, nausea, or a cold sweat
- ▶ Pain or discomfort in the arms or shoulder
- ▶ Shortness of breath

Prevention

- ▶ Don't smoke. Stay away from other people who are smoking.
- ▶ Get your blood pressure checked often.
- ▶ Control your diabetes
- ▶ Get your cholesterol checked often
- ▶ Stay active!
- ▶ Eat a healthy diet
- ▶ Keep a healthy weight
- ▶ Eat less salt (We know that too much sodium can cause high blood pressure, which raises risk for heart attack and stroke.)
- ▶ Limit alcohol use

Tests and Diagnosis

Go to your doctor for your annual physical.

Every case is different, but early detection of Heart Disease generally results in a better outcome.

This information has been adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health