

Women's Heart Risk

Are you at risk for heart disease? The way you live each day affects your heart. An unhealthy lifestyle can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Heart attacks often strike without warning. Making lifestyle changes now could save your life. Below is a list of risk factors for heart disease. Place a checkmark in the box to the left of each risk factor that applies to you. Then, add up your score. Each checkmark counts as one point.

- FAMILY HISTORY** Your father or brother under age 55 or your mother or sister under age 65 has had a heart attack, stroke or bypass surgery.
- OLDER AGE** You are over 55 years old
(After age 65, the death rate increases sharply for women.)
- SMOKING** Either you smoke or you are exposed to secondhand smoke most every day.
- 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 \geq 140/90 mm Hg, or an even lower blood pressure in the setting of chronic kidney disease or diabetes [\geq 130/90 mm Hg]. After age 45, 60% of Caucasian women and 79% of African-American women have high blood pressure.)
BLOOD PRESSURE: _____
- PHYSICAL INACTIVITY** You do not exercise for 20-30 minutes at least 3 days every week.
(For weight control, women need to exercise with 60-90 minutes of a moderate-intensity activity most days.)
- 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 of < 7%.³)
- BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS** Your HDL (High Density Lipo-protein or "good" cholesterol) is less than 50mg/dL. LDL Goals are dependent upon risk.
(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.⁴)
- OBESITY** Check your Body Mass Index (BMI).
(A score of 25-29.9 indicates you are overweight; 30 or greater, obese. Ask your health professional if your BMI places you at risk.)
BMI Score: _____
- METABOLIC SYNDROME** Having at least three of a cluster of symptoms that are listed below places you at risk.
- High blood sugar 110 mg/dL after fasting
 - High triglycerides—at least 150 mg/dL
 - Low HDL (less than 50 mg/dL in women)
 - Blood pressure of 130/85 or higher
 - Women >35" waist
- (Waist measurement of 35" or more or waist-to-hip ratio greater than 0.80 is a predictor of high triglycerides and low HDL levels.)
WAIST: _____ inches
- PREMATURE MENOPAUSE** Either natural or through surgery, early menopause – before the age of 40— is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease.
- BIRTH CONTROL PILLS, combined with** regular exposure to cigarette smoke, *greatly* increases risk of heart attack and stroke, especially after age 35.
- 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.
- UNHEALTHY DIET** A healthy diet consists of fruits, vegetables and whole-grain high-fiber foods.
Aim for...
- five servings of vegetables and two servings of whole fruit daily;
 - fish, especially oily fish, at least twice a week;⁶
 - 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/day;
 - limiting sodium intake to <2.3 g/dL (approximately 1 tsp salt);
 - avoiding all trans-fatty acids⁶ (listed as "hydrogenated oil" in the ingredients section.)

^{1,2,3,4,6} American Heart Assoc Evidence-based Guidelines for CVD Prevention in Women Feb07

⁵ Pregnant and lactating women should avoid eating fish potentially high in methylmercury. Check EPA and USFDA websites for updates and advisories.

Note: A woman is at high risk of CVD if she has established coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, peripheral arterial disease, abdominal aortic aneurysm, diabetes mellitus, chronic renal disease or a global 10-year risk >20% per the Framingham Risk Score.

My Heart Risk Score = _____ Points

Interpreting Your Score: If you have 2 or more points, consult your health practitioner. Ask for a complete assessment to found out what you can do to reduce your risk.

HEALTHY HEARTS PROGRAM
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