

Take New Jersey Women to Heart



LEARN MORE

PROTECT YOUR HEART

GENDER MATTERS

Every year, heart disease takes the lives of one in three American women. It's the #1 killer of women, regardless of race or ethnicity. It also strikes at younger ages than most people think, and the risk rises in middle age. Heart disease can diminish health, well-being, and the ability to do even simple activities like climbing stairs. The fact is, it can decrease your entire quality of life. Two thirds of women who have heart attacks never fully recover. And, if you have a heart attack, your risk of having another increases.

Learn more about how heart disease presents differently in women. Be your own advocate and get the care you need to survive. Talk to your doctor about ways to reduce your risk. Wear a purple ribbon to promote heart wellness and awareness in women. Act now to protect your heart.



PO Box 7827, West Trenton, NJ 08628
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Commemorate National Women's Heart Week February 1-7 by having a heart risk assessment on February 1 and starting a walking program to reduce your risk.* Follow the 7 focus days for women's heart wellness. Visit www.womensheart.org for a heart risk assessment tool and for programs that support wellness and awareness. This brochure is supported by a grant from the NJ Department of Health & Senior Services Office on Women's Health. WHF is a member of The Heart Truth national campaign to raise awareness about heart disease in women. Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

* According to The Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research, walking at least 30 minutes six days a week can cut mortality rates from heart disease in half. Take The President's Challenge and walk 10,000 steps a day using a pedometer to count your steps. Go to www.presidentschallenge.org for details and to find more ways to make fitness fun.

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Three women from New Jersey share their stories of survival

Also in this brochure:

- **WOMEN'S HEART CHECKLIST—ARE YOU AT RISK?**
- **TESTING FOR HEART DISEASE**
- **MILDER SYMPTOMS - HOW TO RESPOND**

CINDY AGE: 37



“I was 5 months pregnant with my fourth child when I found myself paralyzed on the right side and unable to talk. I was having a stroke.

My ten year old daughter called 9-1-1 and it saved my life. Before becoming pregnant, I had warning signs or “TIAs”, but the doctors couldn’t find anything wrong. After my stroke, I was determined to recover and take care of my new infant son and family. Black Americans are especially at risk for stroke. Know the warning signs of stroke and work closely with your doctor to control high blood pressure.”

“For three morning in a row, I awoke with nausea and weakness. The fourth day, I began retching uncontrollably. That’s when I knew it was my heart. I called 9-1-1 and went to the best heart center where I received emergency angioplasty, but I had to insist on an EKG. Thirty percent

of women have heart attacks with out any chest pain at all. Listen to your body. Trust your instincts



JEAN AGE: 50



BEVERLY AGE: 47

“I was tired all the time. My gynecologist blamed it on being peri-menopausal and recommended estrogen, but I declined because of a history of breast cancer in

my family. I suspected my thyroid was the problem, so I saw an endocrinologist for a second opinion. I had gained weight but didn’t know why as I was always careful about what I ate. I was placed on a diet.

“Both doctors knew of my family history... two parents who had triple bypass surgery, a blood cholesterol of 260 with abnormal LDL/HDL ratio and a history of taking a cholesterol-lowering drug since the age of 41. I was completely exhausted and worried if I could continue working. It felt like the life was draining right out of me., Then one day when I was walking my dog, I got this burning sensation in my throat that frightened me. I called my doctor and he saw me right away. He said that my symptoms were related to angina. I had a thallium stress test and then a heart catheterization that revealed a 90% blockage of my left anterior descending artery. I had an angioplasty before suffering permanent damage to my heart. It took me a full year to get a diagnosis. My weight gain was due to fluid retention. I am grateful to be alive.”

WOMEN’S HEART FOUNDATION

TESTING FOR HEART DISEASE: The first-line test for a woman with risks and symptoms is an exercise stress test *combined* with imaging. Imaging greatly improves accuracy of test results. If not feeling well after the test, remain at the health site for further monitoring and insist on being seen by a cardiologist to rule out a cardiac event. The “gold standard” for diagnosing coronary artery disease remains coronary angiography with cardiac catheterization whereby dye and X-rays are used to directly visualize the blood vessels.

Women's Heart Check list... *are you at risk?*

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. If you have 2 or more points, consult with your healthcare professional. Find out what you can do to lower your risk for heart disease. Take Care of Your Heart®.

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 or you have been told that you have high blood pressure (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 (70% of American women do not exercise regularly.)

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.

BLOOD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

(LIPIDS) Your HDL (High Density Lipo-protein or "good" cholesterol) is less than 50 mg/dL, your LDL (Low Density Lipo-protein or "bad" cholesterol) is more than 130 and you have been identified with having risk factors for heart disease. An HDL of 60 is considered protective.

OVERWEIGHT

You are 20 lbs. or more overweight (Over a third of American women are more than 20 pounds over weight). Ask your healthcare professional if your Body Mass Index (BMI) places you at risk. **BMI:** _____

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:** _____ inches

(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.)

POST MENOPAUSAL

by 7 or more years. Either you have had a hysterectomy and had your ovaries removed or completed menopause

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.

EXCESS ALCOHOL INTAKE

A woman should limit her alcohol intake to an occasional drink or to no more than 2 oz. of alcohol per day (2 oz. is equal to one glass of wine, one beer or one cocktail).

MILDER SYMPTOMS- HOW TO RESPOND

WOMEN'S HEART FOUNDATION

Heart disease is the #1 killer of women. One in every three American women dies of heart disease. It is the leading cause of death for women over 34. Heart disease symptoms are often milder in women. The most common early warning sign is sudden onset of extreme fatigue, easily mistaken for the flu. This can occur over a period of several days or two weeks prior to more severe symptoms. Other common signs include severe indigestion with upper abdominal pain, shortness of breath, dizziness and nausea. Fleeting chest pain or simply "a funny feeling in the chest" is also common. If symptoms last for more than 2-3 minutes or the pain leaves and then returns, it could be heart disease and you will need to seek emergency care. If you have any symptoms that cause you concern, make an appointment to talk to your healthcare professional without delay. Ask for a complete assessment to rule out heart disease.