

# Women's Heart



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*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 second-hand 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 White 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. (Seventy percent 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 <50 mg/dL, your LDL (Low Density Lipo-protein or "bad" cholesterol) is >130 and you have been identified with having risk factors for heart disease. An HDL level of 60 is considered protective.

**OVERWEIGHT**

You are 20 pounds or more overweight. (Over a third of American women are more than 20 pounds overweight.) 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 a glass of wine, one beer or one cocktail).

**Total Score\*:** \_\_\_\_\_ Points

**\*Interpreting Your Score.** If you have 2 or more points, consult with your healthcare practitioner and ask for a complete risk assessment. Find out what *you* can do to reduce your risk of heart disease.

## Healthy Hearts Guide

Women's Heart Foundation, PO Box 7827, W. Trenton, NJ 08628