

Women's Health



What Women Need To Know About Heart Disease

(NAPSA)—Women may need to take the latest research about heart disease to heart.

What many don't know is that heart disease kills more American women than all forms of cancer combined, including breast cancer. Nearly half of all women are at risk for developing heart disease, and as a woman ages, her risk increases.

A heart attack can occur without warning. More than 60 percent of women who died suddenly from coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms.

Women of color, including Black American and Latino American women, are more likely to develop risk factors and are at a higher risk of death from heart disease, yet research has shown they are less likely to recognize their risks.

Fortunately, there are lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk. The first step is to understand which risk factors affect you and what actions you can take to lower your risk.

For example, the risk is higher for women who have a family history of heart disease or diabetes. Increasing age is another risk factor. Women are at a higher risk when they reach 55 or become postmenopausal. These are risk factors you cannot control.

Risk factors you can control are diabetes, smoking, blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher, and total cholesterol over 200. If you don't exercise, there's also a risk. Being 30 pounds or more over your recommended weight and having a waist measurement greater than 35 inches are also risk factors.

"It's important to take action to minimize your risks," said Dr.



Aim for 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity every day.

Gioia Turitto, spokesperson for Close the Gap, an educational initiative sponsored by Boston Scientific. Close the Gap encourages women to be responsible for their heart health by following these tips:

- If you smoke, quit.
- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Get moving. Make a commitment to be more physically active. Every day, aim for 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity such as taking a brisk walk, raking, dancing, light-weight lifting, housecleaning or gardening.
- Eat for heart health. Choose a diet low in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and cholesterol. Include whole grains, vegetables and fruits.
- Know your numbers. Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure, cholesterol (total, HDL, LDL and triglycerides) and blood glucose. Work with your doctor to improve any numbers that are not normal.

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