



capitahealth

Women's Heart Health

Galentine's Day 2/12/2021

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Facts

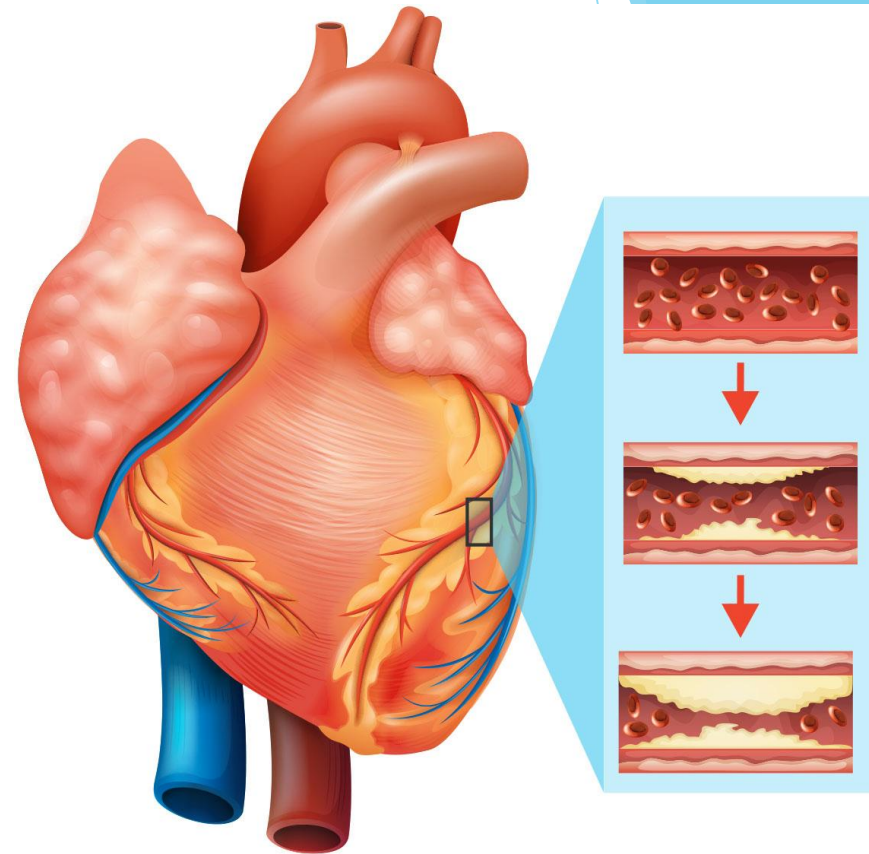
- ▶ Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the US
- ▶ Heart disease causes 1 in 3 women's deaths each year, that's approximately one woman per minute
- ▶ Breast cancer causes 1 in 31 women's death in America
- ▶ Only 1 in 5 American women believe that it is her greatest health threat
- ▶ 90% of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease
- ▶ Since 1984, more women than men have died each year from heart disease and the gap between men and women's survival continues to widen



Understanding Heart Disease

- ▶ Heart disease is an umbrella term to describe different diseases involving the heart and vascular system
- ▶ Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common type of heart disease
- ▶ About 1 in 16 women age 20 and older (6.2%) have CAD
- ▶ It develops when your coronary arteries become damaged or diseased
- ▶ This often results when a waxy substance called plaque or atherosclerosis builds up in the walls of the arteries

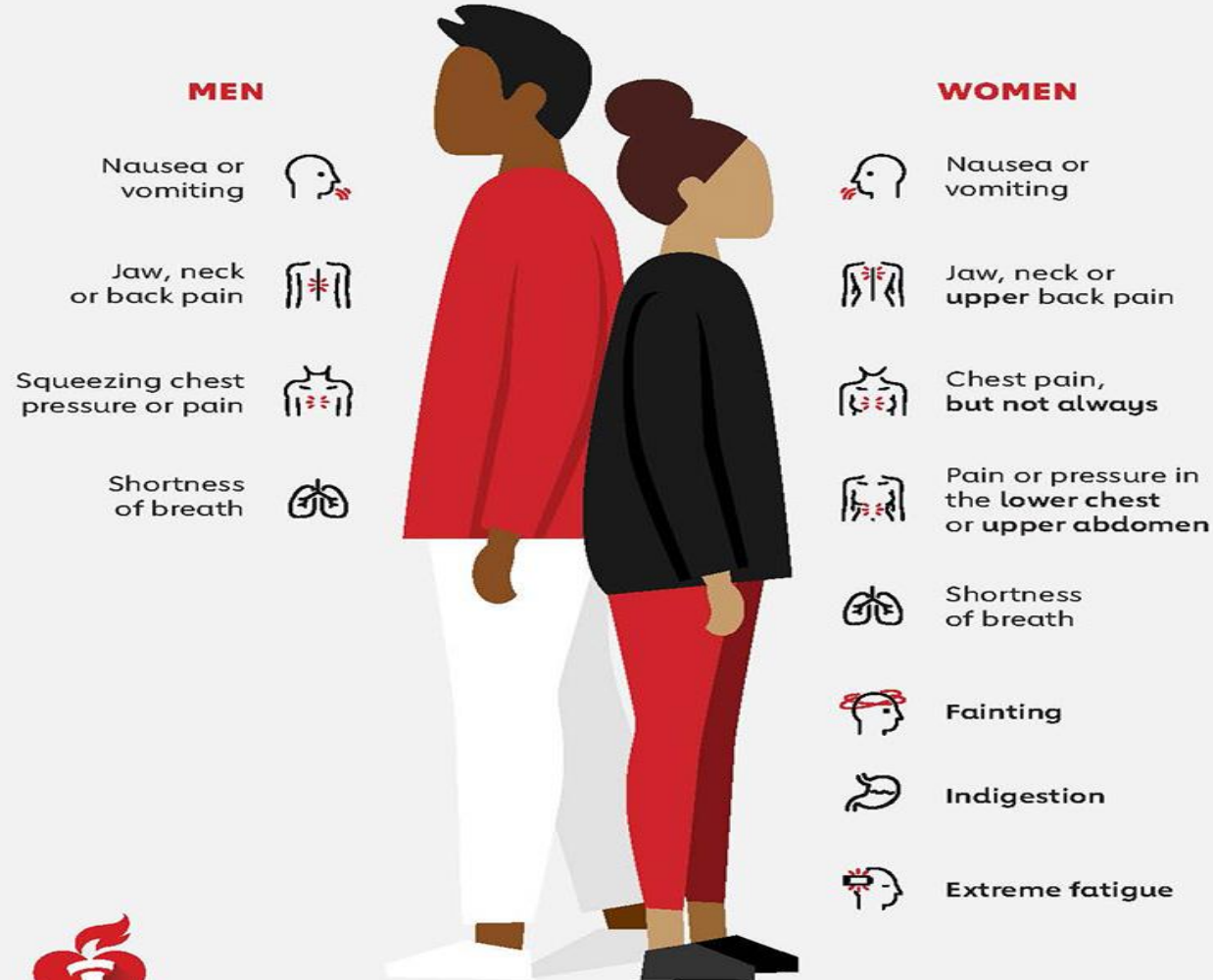
- ▶ When your coronary arteries become narrow or blocked it means there is less blood flow to the heart
- ▶ In some cases plaque can cause a rupture and blood flow is completely blocked
- ▶ CAD can lead to
 - Chest pain (angina)
 - Heart attack
 - Heart failure
 - Abnormal heart rhythms
- ▶ Some women may have no overt signs of blockages in the 3 main coronary arteries yet still have reduced blood flow to the heart due to blockages or dysfunction in smaller arteries which can make diagnosis and treatment challenging.



HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS: MEN VS. WOMEN

By American Heart Association News

The most common symptom of a heart attack for both men and women is chest pain. But women may experience less obvious warning signs.



Source: American Heart Association's journal, *Circulation*
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Be Your Own Heart Hero!

- ▶ Get screened every year
- ▶ Don't ignore symptoms
- ▶ Ask questions about your own heart health
- ▶ Understanding your personal risk factors is one of the best things you can do for your heart health



Traditional Risk Factors

- ▶ Diabetes (triples the risk of CAD in women but only doubles in men)
- ▶ High cholesterol
- ▶ Smoking
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Not exercising or sitting for long periods of time
- ▶ Mental stress and depression (affects women's hearts more than men)
- ▶ Eating a diet high in salt, saturated fats, cholesterol, and added sugar
- ▶ Being overweight or obese
- ▶ Family history of early heart disease
- ▶ Older age
- ▶ Race: African American and South Asian women at higher risk

Risk Factors Unique to Women

- ▶ Menopause
- ▶ Having started menstruating before 10 or after 17 years of age
- ▶ Gestational hypertension or preeclampsia
- ▶ Gestational diabetes during any pregnancy
- ▶ Preterm delivery (before 37 weeks)
- ▶ Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
- ▶ Oral birth control if you smoke
- ▶ Autoimmune diseases (Rheumatoid arthritis, Lupus which are more common in women)
- ▶ Breast cancer treatments (chemotherapy and radiation) can damage the heart acutely and in the future

How to Reduce Your Risk of Heart Disease

- ▶ Make healthy food choices to eat more plant based and less processed foods
- ▶ Lose weight if needed
- ▶ Quit smoking and don't start
- ▶ Reduce stress
- ▶ Get enough sleep
- ▶ Limit alcohol to less than one drink per day
- ▶ Know your numbers!
- ▶ Make your health a priority

Heart Healthy Diet

- ▶ A variety of vegetables from all of the subgroups- dark green, red/orange, legumes
- ▶ Fruits
- ▶ Grains, at least half of which are whole grains
- ▶ Fat free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or fortified non-dairy beverages (soy milk, almond milk, oat milk)
- ▶ A variety of protein foods including seafood, lean meats and poultry, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy products



Foods to Limit

▶ Saturated fat and trans fat

- ▶ Saturated fats can increase cholesterol levels and clog arteries
- ▶ Should make up no more than 10% of calories each day
- ▶ Swap out saturated fats like butter for more healthy fats such as olive oil or vegetable-based oils

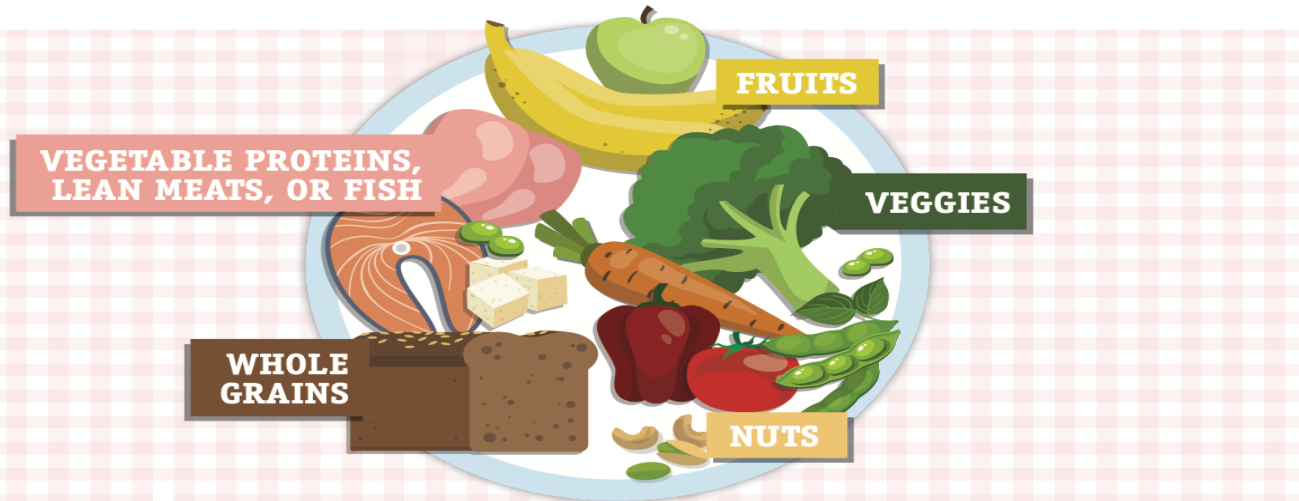
▶ Sodium

- ▶ Too much sodium linked to high BP, stroke, fluid retention
- ▶ Limit salt to less than 2,300 mg per day which is less than 1 tsp
- ▶ If you have hypertension, are over 51, or have other health problems you may benefit from less than 1,500 mg per day

▶ Added sugars

- ▶ Avoid sugary beverages, drink water
- ▶ Should account for less than 10% of your daily calories

To **PROTECT YOUR HEART**, eat more...



MEDITERRANEAN

- ↓ Light on dairy, meats and sweets
- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Olive oil
- ✓ Wine (in moderation)

VEGETARIAN

- ✗ Cuts out meat
- ✓ Vegetable proteins (soy products, legumes)

VEGAN goes further with no meat, fish, eggs or dairy products

WHOLE FOOD PLANT-BASED EATING avoids processed foods

DIETARY APPROACHES TO STOP HYPERTENSION (DASH)

- ↓ Limits salt to less than 1,500 mg/day
- ✓ Lean meat, poultry, fish
- ✓ Fruits and vegetables rich in potassium (bananas and leafy greens)

CUT BACK
on processed meats
and saturated fats

AVOID
trans fats

DRINK WATER
instead of sodas
or juice!

**MORE
TIPS**

For more information, visit [CardioSmart.org/Nutrition](https://www.CardioSmart.org/Nutrition)

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Benefits of Exercise

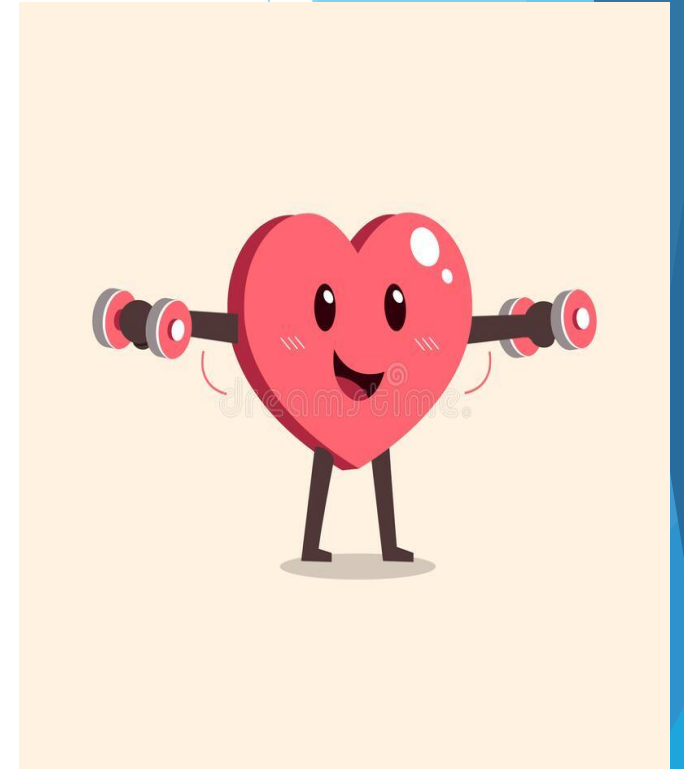
- ▶ Lowers BP
- ▶ Lowers LDL (bad cholesterol)
- ▶ Opens blood vessels and gets your heart pumping which improves circulation
- ▶ Helps shed excess pounds, reducing the strain on your heart
- ▶ Helps your body maintain the right balance of hormones and other factors involved in clotting and inflammation that may promote CAD
- ▶ Improves mood and reduces depression (endorphins)
- ▶ Promotes sleep
- ▶ Keeps stress levels in check
- ▶ Builds lean muscle which burns more calories even when you're not exercising
- ▶ Improves balance, prevents fall in older people
- ▶ Lowers blood sugar levels
- ▶ Prevents osteoporosis and arthritis
- ▶ Helps prevent some kinds of cancers and body's response to cancer treatments
- ▶ May ward off or delay dementia
- ▶ People who exercise regularly are less likely to smoke and tend to choose healthier food options



How Much Exercise do You Need?

- ▶ Ideally you should aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of high intensity exercise per week plus two sessions of strength training
- ▶ Moderate intensity: can easily carry on a conversation with full sentences, you're not exerting enough effort
 - ▶ Brisk walking (at least 2.5 mph)
 - ▶ Water aerobics
 - ▶ Dancing
 - ▶ Gardening
 - ▶ Tennis doubles
 - ▶ Biking slower than 10 mph
- ▶ High intensity: Can only say a few words at a time
 - ▶ Hiking uphill or with heavy backpack
 - ▶ Running
 - ▶ Swimming laps
 - ▶ Aerobic dancing
 - ▶ Heavy yardwork
 - ▶ Tennis singles
 - ▶ Cycling faster than 10mph
 - ▶ Jumping rope

- ▶ Strength training
 - ▶ Lifting weights
 - ▶ Using resistance bands
 - ▶ Sit-ups, pushups, planks
 - ▶ Yoga, Pilates, tai-chi
 - ▶ Core and kettlebell workouts
- ▶ Spend less time sitting
- ▶ Even light intensity activity can offset some of the risks of being sedentary
- ▶ Increase amount and intensity gradually over time



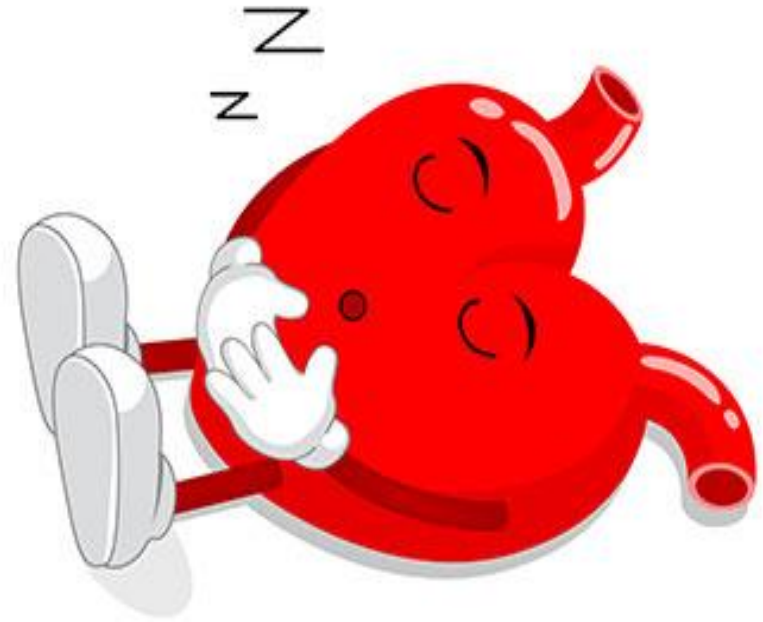
Stress Management

- ▶ Prolonged stress can increase hormones and chemicals that promote inflammation throughout the body
- ▶ Stress can lead to other bad habits such as poor food choices, smoking, excess drinking
- ▶ Figure out what helps you calm down
- ▶ Exercise!
- ▶ Take a break
- ▶ Meditate, practice deep breathing
- ▶ Walk away from the problem temporarily
- ▶ Talk to a professional if you are anxious or depressed talk



Sleep

- ▶ Amount and quality of sleep can influence your eating habits, mood, memory, internal organs and more
- ▶ Turn tech devices off!
- ▶ Set a morning and nighttime routine
- ▶ Try to get 7-9 hours



Take-home Points

- ▶ Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women in the US
- ▶ Know your risk factors! Not only do traditional risk factors apply to women but also ones that are unique to females.
- ▶ Know what symptom to look out for and act fast
- ▶ Maintain a heart healthy diet
- ▶ Stay active
- ▶ Stress management
- ▶ Sleep well
- ▶ 80% of heart disease and stroke can be prevented through lifestyle change!



Questions and Answers

- ▶ **Q:** Seltzer water has become popular lately. Instead of having a glass a wine, is seltzer water a good option?
A: Seltzer water, as long as there is no added sugar or sodium, is a great option and equally as hydrating as water.
- ▶ **Q:** What do you think of recent data suggesting that low fat diets may worsen heart health?
A: Diets low in saturated fat are recommended by the AHA/ACC for prevention of atherosclerotic heart disease. Many times people following a low fat diet end up consuming too many simple carbohydrates and added sugars which is equally detrimental and may be the reason some individuals have bad outcomes on low fat diets.
- ▶ **Q:** Do we start going to our Primary for prevention or should we start with a specialist?
A: Your PCP is a great place to start when trying to figure out what you can do to reduce your risk of heart disease. You can go to a specialist if you are having any symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath or are having difficulty controlling your blood pressure.

Questions and Answers continued

▶ **Q: It is very difficult to only limit 1 tsp of salt. Sodium is an ingredient in all foods. Is this limit what we add to our plate?**

A: The average American consumes a lot more salt than the recommended amount. The 1 tsp rule (2,300mg) applies to total sodium intake per day not just what we add to our plate. If you have high blood pressure or heart failure, you should be consuming less than 1,500mg which is less than a teaspoon.

▶ **Q: What is known about long term effects of Covid on the heart?**

A: We don't know all the long-term effects of COVID 19 on the heart yet but so far we do know that it can cause inflammation of the heart muscle, myocarditis, which can lead to heart failure, abnormal heart rhythms, and even sudden death. Other cardiac complications of COVID 19 include heart attack, and blood clots. As time goes on we will learn the full effect of COVID 19 on humans.

▶ **Q: I like Salmon and get farm raised Salmon. Is that okay to eat once or twice a month?**

A: Salmon is great as long as it is cooked with minimal oil and baked or grilled.

Questions and Answers continued

▶ **Q: Is it preferable to give high fat foods to children?**

A: Atherosclerotic heart disease actually starts in childhood so it is important for children to have balanced and healthy diets just like adults.