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WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE – KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death for women throughout the world. More women die from heart disease than from cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Alzheimer's disease and accidents combined. More women than men die from stroke every year.



Heart disease seems to happen slightly differently in women than in men. For example, plaque may build up differently in a woman's arteries so that a doctor cannot see a blockage during a cardiac catheterization test. Researchers are trying to understand these differences to help find the best ways to prevent, diagnose and treat women who have heart disease.

Heart disease. When plaque builds up in the coronary arteries, it is called heart disease or coronary artery disease. The heart doesn't get the blood it needs to work. Over time, this can weaken or damage the heart. If the blood flow is blocked, it can cause a heart attack.

Remember, even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease.

Stroke. Plaque can also build up in the neck arteries, limiting blood flow to the brain. If the blood flow is blocked, it can cause an ischemic stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA). Another type of stroke is called a hemorrhagic stroke. This type of stroke happens when an artery in the brain leaks or bursts. This causes bleeding inside the brain or near the surface of the brain.

Knowing symptoms of a heart attack and a stroke can help save lives.

Women are more likely than men to delay seeking help for a possible heart attack. Women delay for many reasons, like not being sure it is a heart attack or not wanting to bother others. But it is better to be safe than sorry. Call for help, even if you're not sure it's a heart attack or stroke.

For men and women, the most common symptom is chest pain or pressure in the chest. Women are somewhat more likely than men to have other symptoms such as shortness of breath, nausea and pain or pressure in other parts of their body.

Do not wait if you think you are having a heart attack or stroke. Getting help fast can save your life.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/women.htm>

Explore more at the [Chiefs Wellness Program homepage](#) »