



Understanding and Preventing Heart Disease

Heart disease affects the quality of life of millions of Americans and is the leading cause of death in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 700,000, or 29%, of people die of heart disease in the U.S. each year. Heart disease is a broad term that covers several specific conditions, the most common being coronary heart disease (CHD).

Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)

CHD occurs when there is plaque buildup in the coronary arteries (arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle). As a result of the plaque buildup, there is a lack of blood flow and oxygen to the heart. There is also the possibility of plaques rupturing and causing blood clots.

Angina. Angina is the most common symptom of CDH. Angina is chest pain or discomfort that occurs when the heart is not getting enough blood.

Heart Failure.

CHD can also lead to heart failure, a problem that occurs when the heart cannot pump blood the way that it should.



Heart Attack. A heart attack is, for some people, the first symptom of CHD. A heart attack, or myocardial infarction, strikes if the blood supply to the heart is severely reduced or completely blocked. The more time that passes without treatment, the greater the damage to the heart.



Signs of a Heart Attack

According to the CDC, the five major symptoms of a heart attack are:

- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back.
- Feeling weak, light-headed, or faint.
- Chest pain or discomfort.
- Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder.
- Shortness of breath.

If you think that you or someone you know is having a heart attack, you should call 9-1-1 immediately.

Please note that the information contained herein should not be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition, and is provided for your information only.

Risk Factors and Prevention: What You Can Do

High Cholesterol – Maintain a healthy level through diet and exercise.

High Blood Pressure – Keep your blood pressure levels normal through diet, exercise, not smoking, and maintaining a healthy weight.

Tobacco – Smoking increases your risk for high blood pressure and stroke. A person's risk of heart attack decreases soon after quitting.

Alcohol – Drink only in moderation and responsibly since alcohol use increases your risk for heart disease.

Exercise – Engaging in physical activity for at least 30 minutes several days a week will help reduce your risk of heart disease.

Diet and Nutrition – A healthy diet can help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, prevent diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Please visit the following to learn more:
www.cdc.gov
www.americanheart.org

Master's Level Clinicians are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to speak with you about any issues you may be experiencing. Call us today!