

Doctor's Bag



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Know Your Numbers

One of the best ways to protect yourself against heart disease is to build a good relationship with your personal physician. Keep the lines of communication open. Have your cholesterol and blood pressure levels checked on a routine basis. Talk to your doctor about diet and exercise.

The following chart is a good reference for heart-healthy goals you need to meet.

Total cholesterol	<200
LDL ("bad") cholesterol	<100 is optimal.
HDL ("good") cholesterol	50 or higher
Triglycerides	<150
Blood pressure	<120/80
Fasting glucose	<100
Body Mass Index (BMI)	<25
Waist circumference	<35 inches
Exercise	Minimum 30 minutes most days

Your annual physical examination is a great time to talk to your doctor about the risks and prevention of heart disease. If you haven't schedule one for 2010, do it soon.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms, don't wait or try to second-guess your condition. Please call your physician as soon as possible to discuss a course of action.

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

Heart Disease in Women

An excerpt from the Food & Drug Administration "Heart Disease in Women"

A lot of people think that women do not get heart disease. More women die from heart disease than from anything else.

What are the signs of heart disease in women?

The most important sign is feeling really tired – even after enough sleep. Other signs of heart disease in women are:

- Trouble breathing
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling sick to the stomach
- Feeling scared or nervous
- New or worse headaches
- An ache in the chest
- Feeling "heavy" or "tight" in the chest
- A burning feeling in the chest
- Pain in the back, between the shoulder blades
- Pain or tightness in the chest that spreads to the jaw, neck, shoulders, ear, or the inside of the arms
- Pain in the belly, above the belly button

Don't wait to get help. Call your personal physician if you experience any of these warning signs.

Lower your risk of heart disease

- Find out if heart disease runs in your family.
- Visit your doctor if you suspect you may be at risk.
- Don't smoke. Stay away from other people who are smoking.
- Get your blood pressure checked often. You might need medicine to keep it at the right level.
- Control your diabetes.
- Get your cholesterol checked routinely.
- Stay active. Walking every day can lower your chances of a heart attack.
- Eat right and keep a healthy weight.
- Eat less salt.
- Being stressed, angry or sad a lot may add to your risk of heart attack. Talk to your doctor if these feelings persist.
- If you've had a heart attack, talk to your doctor about medicine. Some medicines can help cut down the risk of having another heart attack.

HLTip: Check to see if your company's health plan offers a "health coach" for people who are at risk for heart disease.



DidUKnow?

From the Centers for Disease Control "Women and Heart Disease Fact Sheet"

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States.
- Heart disease killed 26% of the women who died in 2006 – more than one in every four.
- Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," around the same number of women and men die each year of heart disease in the U.S. Unfortunately, 36% of women did not perceive themselves to be at risk for heart disease in a 2005 survey.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women of most racial/ethnic groups in the U.S., including African Americans, American Indians or Alaska natives, Hispanics and whites. For Asian American women, heart disease is second only to cancer.
- In 2006, about 6.6% of all white women, 9.0% of black women and 6.3% of Mexican American women were living with coronary heart disease.
- Almost two-thirds of the women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease have no previous symptoms.

Information Sources:

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) Women and Heart Disease Fact Sheet, September 2009 (http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/library/fs_women_heart.htm)

FDA (US Food & Drug Administration) Heart Disease in Women, August 2005 (<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ByAudience/ForWomen/ucm118528.htm>)