

Take Control



A Newsletter to
Promote Healthy
Living for High Blood
Pressure Control

DON'T LET HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL YOU—TAKE CONTROL • Spring 2017

Heart Disease in Women

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men and women in the United States. As the nation's number one killer, February has been declared American Heart Month. All individuals need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of heart disease, but this is especially important for women, who are affected differently than men.

Sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," heart disease kills just as many women and men each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2013, 321,000 men and 289,758 women were killed because of heart disease. That's one in every four deaths for both men and women.

Signs and symptoms of heart disease vary among men and women. Though they both can experience the typical symptoms such as chest pains or cold sweats, women can have less obvious symptoms. These include: upper back pain, jaw or neck pain, shortness of breath, nausea, and vomiting. Women who experience these symptoms often do not associate these with a heart problem. Heart disease can also be silent and undiagnosed until the moment a woman has a heart episode (i.e. heart attack, stroke, heart failure, or arrhythmia).

"The signs and symptoms of heart disease are a little different for men and women. The typical symptoms such as chest pain, pain radiating to shoulder or arm, shortness of breath, palpitation or increases perspiration, that present in men also present in women. However, women tend to feel more fatigue or tiredness as a symptom," said Appathurai Balamurugan, MD, DrPH, MPH, State Chronic Disease Director and Medical Director for Chronic Disease Branch at the Arkansas Department of Health.

It is important to know the risk factors associated with heart disease. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease. Almost half of Americans have at least one of these three risks. Other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can put you at higher risk of heart disease too. These include: diabetes, being overweight and obese, poor diet, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use.

To reduce your chances of getting heart disease, it is important to have controlled blood pressure and to talk to your healthcare provider about being tested for diabetes. Also, stop smoking, make healthy food choices, limit alcohol intake, and reduce stress levels.

Acting F.A.S.T

Fast treatment can reduce brain damage caused by a stroke. The first three hours following a stroke is the most critical time for a patient. The patient should seek medical attention during this window of time in order to receive the best treatment options available.

In order to identify the signs and symptoms of a stroke, you must be able to recognize the following:

- Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or lack of coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do the following test:

Face- Ask the person to smile. Is their smile uneven? Does one side of the face droop or is it numb?

Arm Weakness- Ask the person to raise both of their arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Speech- Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like, "The grass is green." Is their speech slurred or strange?

Time- If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1, and get the person to the hospital immediately. Check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared.

By knowing the signs and symptoms of stroke, you can be prepared to take quick action and perhaps save a life—maybe even your own.

STROKE SYMPTOMS: ACT FAST - CALL 911

F 	A 	S 	T 
FACE DROOP	ARM DRIFT	SLURRED SPEECH	TIME TO CALL 911

Visit HealthyArkansas.gov to learn more. 

The Toll of Smoking in Arkansas

Smoking kills more people than alcohol, car wrecks, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined. In the United States, 480,000 Americans die every year from smoking, and of those Americans, 41,000 die from secondhand smoke. This is why smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S.

Desha County has the highest rate of youth cigarette use in Arkansas. Of the 12,505 people who live in the county, about 3,000 adults and 2,000 youth under the age of 18 smoke cigarettes.

Smoking causes damage to most every organ in the body. Smokers are at a greater risk of developing diseases such as heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, cancer and it can increase risks for eye disease and arthritis. Cancer is by far the deadliest smoking-related disease.

In Arkansas, 33.5 percent of cancer deaths are due to smoking. At least 70 of the 7,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke cause cancer. Cancers related to smoking affect all parts of the body including the bladder, blood (leukemia), cervix, mouth, stomach, colon, throat, kidney, liver, pancreas, and lungs. Lung cancer by far the worst, killing 7,300 people each year.

Most smokers become addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes. More people in the U.S. are addicted to nicotine than to any other drug. Quitting smoking takes a lot of hard work. For

someone trying to quit, it may take several tries. Since e-cigarettes (e-cigs) emerged, they have been promoted as a harmless way to quit smoking regular cigarettes; however, most do not realize that e-cigarettes contain nicotine and other cancer causing chemicals that are harmful to your body. Many of these chemicals are the same as those found in regular cigarettes that cause cancer.

The U.S. Surgeon General recently released a report on e-cigarettes. The report warns that e-cigarette use is a growing public health threat. There is a special concern about youth and young adults who use e-cigarettes. The nicotine in e-cigarettes can cause harm to the developing brain of youth. Pregnant women are also at risk. Using e-cigarettes during pregnancy can cause serious problems such as Sudden Infant Death syndrome (SIDS).

Smoking cigarettes and using e-cigarettes are harmful to both you and your loved ones. If you or someone you know wants to make a plan to quit, call 1-800-Quit-Now for tips on stopping smoking, as well as to access free resources to assist you.

