

Cardiovascular Health in Missouri



The heart of the matter . . .

The warning signs of a heart attack are often different for women than for men. Many women still think heart attacks happen primarily to men and fail to recognize their own risk factors and symptoms because they don't always make their own health a top priority.

Did you know?

- ♥ Heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases combined are the number one killer in Missouri, accounting for nearly 40 percent of all deaths in women (2005 data).
- ♥ Almost 30 women a day die from cardiovascular disease (2005 data).
- ♥ The financial costs of cardiovascular disease are staggering. Heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases totaled \$4 billion in direct medical charges in 2005.

Heart attack warning signs for women

- Shortness of breath – with or without chest pain
- Nausea and lightheadedness
- Flu-like symptoms including chills, cold sweats, clamminess or profuse sweating
- Heart palpitations and paleness
- Heartburn, indigestion or gas-like pain
- Extreme fatigue or weakness
- Feelings of anxiety or a sense of impending doom
- Chest discomfort (angina): pain, squeezing, tightness or pressure in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and returns
- Discomfort in other areas including pain in one or both arms (especially the left arm), the back, between the shoulder blades, neck, jaw or stomach

Women are at risk if they:

- Smoke
- Are physically inactive
- Have high blood pressure
- Drink too much alcohol
- Have a family history of heart disease
- Are under chronic stress
- Have a high blood cholesterol level
- Have diabetes
- Are post-menopausal
- Don't see a doctor regularly
- Are overweight

What can women do to control their risk factors?

Women can make important lifestyle changes that will reduce their risk of developing heart disease:

- Quit smoking
- Increase physical activity
- Eat a healthy diet
- Manage stress
- Get regular medical check-ups
- Control their weight



Data Sources:

1. Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Health Informatics, Missouri Information for Community Assessment (MICA), www.dhss.mo.gov/DataandStatisticalReports/index.html
2. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) "Act in Time to Heart Attack Signs." www.nhlbi.nih.gov
3. The American Heart Association, www.americanheart.org

