



Healthy Women

Presented by the Coalition of Labor Union Women

Heart Attack and Stroke in Women

Estrogen increases the amount of good cholesterol (HDL) and decreases the amount of bad cholesterol (LDL) in the body. This process provides women with protection against cardiovascular disease. During menopause, women's ovaries stop producing estrogen; consequently, the amount of bad cholesterol rises and increases women's risk of heart attack and stroke.

Women need to be aware of the effects of menopause on coronary heart disease (CHD). If you have concerns about your risk factors for CHD, contact your health care provider to discuss prevention options.

The Facts

- Cardiovascular diseases kill more women than all forms of cancer, chronic lung disease, pneumonia, diabetes, accidents and AIDS combined.
- One in two women will eventually die of heart disease or stroke.
- Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women.
- More than 250,000 women die of heart disease each year.
- In 63 percent of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease, there were not previous symptoms.
- For ages 35-74, the death rate from heart attack for black women is more than 30 percent higher than that of white women.
- Forty-four percent of women will die within one year after having a heart attack.

Risk Factors

- African-American women are at higher risk than Caucasian women.
- A family member has experienced a cardiovascular disease.
- Diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Decreased levels of estrogen.

Risk Factors (cont'd)

- High blood cholesterol will more than likely cause buildup on your artery walls.
- High triglyceride (the chemical form of most fats) levels.
- High levels of stress, tension, anxiety, worry and the inability to relax.
- Smoking causes the blood vessels to narrow, making your heart beat faster, raising your blood pressure.
- Drinking alcohol can contribute to high triglycerides; you are at risk of stroke if you drink to excess.
- Heart disease is almost twice as likely to develop in inactive people.
- Excess weight or obesity, even if you have no other risk factors.

The Options

- ✓ A well-balanced diet.
- ✓ Regular exercise.

Partner with your health care provider. Act now to prevent serious illness later.

For additional copies, please contact the National CLUW Office
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