

# WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HEART DISEASE AND HEART ATTACKS

## Are women at risk?

**Yes.** Heart disease is the **leading cause of death** among women over 65. Heart disease kills 1 in every 4 women.

## What do women need to know about heart disease and heart attacks?

Women are less likely to survive heart attacks than men.

Warning signs of a heart attack include:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in one or both arms, neck, jaw, back, or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, lightheadedness, breaking out in a cold sweat

Women may also have more vague signs than men such as:

- Unusual tiredness
- Anxiety (feeling uneasy or worried)
- Trouble sleeping
- Indigestion (upset stomach)
- Problems breathing

## What can women do to protect themselves?

Risk factors are conditions that make a person more likely to develop a disease. You can't change some risk factors, such as family history (heredity) and age. You **can** change other important risk factors for heart disease:

Lifestyle changes:

- Stop smoking
- Increase physical activity
- Lose weight if overweight

Control these if you have them:

- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes

## Should post-menopausal women use hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to reduce heart disease risk?

**No.** HRT **can** be used for short periods of time to minimize the symptoms of menopause (such as hot flashes) but should not be used long-term for prevention. Talk with your health care provider about your specific questions and concerns.

**If you think you or someone else is having a heart attack, get help immediately! Call 911!**

