

Cardiovascular Risk Factors

Risk Factors are conditions or behaviors that increase your chance of getting a certain disease. Some risk factors for coronary heart disease can be treated or controlled and some cannot. The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk of developing coronary heart disease.

Uncontrollable Risk Factors:

Increasing Age

The risk of coronary heart disease increases with age.

- Men ages 45 and older have increased risk.
- Women ages 55 and older have increased risk.

Family History

Children of parents who developed coronary heart disease before age 55 are more likely to develop it themselves.

Racial or Ethnic Background

African Americans, Mexican Americans, American Indians, and other Native Americans have greater risk than Caucasians.

Controllable Risk Factors:

Physical Inactivity

30-60 minutes of physical activity on most days helps reduce your risk.

Smoking

- People who smoke cigarettes have the greatest risk.
- Exposure to other people's smoke increases risk even for non-smokers.

Overweight or Obesity

- People who have too much body fat, especially around the waist, have increased risk.
- People with Body Mass Index (BMI) values of 25 or greater have increased risk.

High Blood Pressure

- People who have blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or higher have increased risk.
- Lowering blood pressure reduces the risk of coronary heart disease.

High Blood Cholesterol

- People with total cholesterol levels of 200 mg/dL or higher have increased risk.
- People with heart disease or diabetes, who have low-density lipoprotein (LDL) levels of 100 mg/dL or higher, have increased risk.
- People with no other risk factors, who have LDL levels of 160 mg/dL or higher, have increased risk.
- People with high-density lipoprotein (HDL) levels of less than 40 mg/dL may have increased risk.
- People with triglyceride levels above 150 mm/dL may have increased risk.

The best way to prevent coronary heart disease is to:

- Know your risk factors
- Tell your doctor if you have risk factors
- Take steps to control your controllable risk factors

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February- Heart Health

The heart is a powerful muscle, about the size of your fist. It is responsible for pumping blood to the entire body.

In a healthy adult, the body contains about 2 gallons (5 liters) of blood that is circulated over and over through the body. The blood moves from the heart, into arteries, capillaries, and veins before returning to the heart.

The entire cycle takes about 60 seconds, during which time the blood carries oxygen and nutrients to all the cells in the body.

The blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscle itself are called the **coronary artery**.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is not one single disease or condition. It is a group of different disorders that affect your heart and blood vessels. You are born with some types of cardiovascular diseases, and you develop others during your lifetime. Angina, atherosclerosis, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, and heart attack are all CVD's.

Choosing a healthy lifestyle can help you reduce the risk of coronary heart disease or minimize its damage.

Healthy lifestyles include eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, quitting (or not starting) smoking, and minimizing stress.

Provided by Community of Christ Health Ministries Association
Material from www.FDA.gov/hearthealth



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