

Heart Disease Prevention



ORLANDO
HEALTH[®]

**Heart &
Vascular
Institute**

Just the Facts

What Is Heart Disease?

Heart disease is a broad term used to refer to several conditions that affect the heart muscle, blood vessels or both. The various conditions classified under heart disease include coronary artery disease, heart valve problems, abnormal heart rhythms, heart infections and heart failure.

Symptoms of Heart Disease

- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chest pain
- A slow or racing heartbeat
- Pounding or fluttering heartbeats
- Pain, numbness or weakness in the arms or legs
- Fainting or nearly fainting
- Swelling in the hands, legs, ankles or feet
- Fatigue

Risk Factors of Heart Disease

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol use
- Medications and supplements
- Stress
- Sleep apnea
- Genetics

Partners in your care

At the Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute, heart care is a group effort. Our multidisciplinary team of cardiovascular specialists works together to evaluate, diagnose, and treat each patient by providing:

- Convenient service for cardiovascular patients
- Compassion at our core
- Collaborative cardiovascular treatment
- Our quality promise

What Is Heart Disease?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women. It accounts for one in every four deaths in our country. In this informative guide, we will discuss heart disease, its symptoms, risk factors and preventive measures you can take to help reduce your risk.

Heart disease is a broad term used to refer to several conditions that affect the heart muscle, blood vessels or both. The various conditions classified under heart disease include coronary artery disease, heart valve problems, congenital heart defects, abnormal heart rhythms, heart infections and heart failure.

Many of these conditions are caused by a process known as atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is a condition in which plaque builds up along the walls of the arteries. This buildup causes the arteries to narrow, making it more difficult for blood to flow to other parts of the body. As the plaque continues to accumulate, chest pain may occur, or a blood clot can form. A blood clot stops the flow of blood and may often lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Over time, atherosclerosis can lead to the development of coronary artery disease, irregular heartbeat or even heart failure. While each of these conditions requires lifestyle changes and medical treatment, many people enjoy full, active lives when their condition is managed properly.

Symptoms of Heart Disease

Heart disease encompasses a wide range of conditions, so symptoms often vary. However, the most common symptoms of heart disease include:

- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chest pain
- A slow or racing heartbeat
- Pounding or fluttering heartbeats
- Pain, numbness or weakness in the arms or legs
- Fainting or nearly fainting
- Swelling in the hands, legs, ankles or feet
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Understanding the Risk Factors of Heart Disease

There are several key risk factors that may increase your chance of developing heart disease. By understanding these risk factors, you or a loved one can make positive lifestyle changes that may help to reduce the risk for heart disease.

High Blood Pressure

Also known as hypertension, high blood pressure is one of the most prevalent risk factors for heart disease. In fact, one in three adult Americans suffers from this condition. High blood pressure usually exhibits no outward symptoms, so those affected are often unaware of their condition.

Actions:

- Blood pressure changes over time, so it is important to have your blood pressure checked by your doctor regularly.
- Know your blood pressure numbers. A normal blood pressure reading is 120/80 or lower.
- It is crucial to make healthy lifestyle choices in order to maintain normal blood pressure. This includes reducing salt intake, drinking alcohol in moderation, maintaining an appropriate weight, quitting smoking and eating more fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products.

Diabetes

Diabetes is another major risk factor for heart disease. Individuals diagnosed with diabetes are at greater risk for stroke and are more than twice as likely to develop heart disease.

Actions:

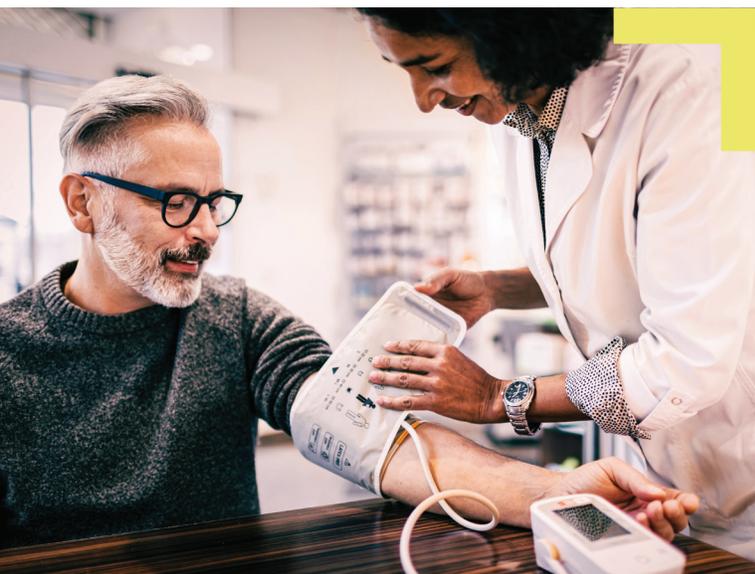
- Maintain a healthy weight, eat a balanced diet and exercise regularly to prevent or control diabetes.
- Know the warning signs of diabetes. The most common signs include excessive thirst, frequent urination and unusual weight loss.
- If you have a family history of diabetes, it is important to undergo a diabetes screening test.
- If you have been previously diagnosed with diabetes, be sure to keep your blood sugar well controlled at all times.
- If you had diabetes during pregnancy, ask your doctor to schedule a diabetes screening test every two years following your pregnancy.

High Cholesterol

Cholesterol is responsible for contributing to plaque buildup in your arteries, which can ultimately lead to a heart attack or stroke. Similar to high blood pressure, high cholesterol usually exhibits no outward symptoms.

Actions:

- Have your doctor check your cholesterol levels regularly.
- Know your good and bad cholesterol levels. HDL cholesterol (good) should be higher than 40 for men and above 50 for women. LDL cholesterol (bad) should be less than 100, and triglycerides (bad) should be less than 150.
- Eat foods that are low in cholesterol and saturated fats. Your diet should include fruits, vegetables, fish and whole grains.





Smoking

In addition to causing respiratory diseases and lung cancer, smoking is also a leading cause of heart disease. The chemicals in tobacco smoke can damage the cells that line coronary arteries and other blood vessels, contributing to atherosclerosis.

Actions:

- Quit smoking. If you need support, talk to your doctor or call the Orlando Health Cancer Institute education line at **(877) 252-6094** to sign up for a smoking cessation program.
- Avoid secondhand smoke whenever possible.

Obesity

Adults who are overweight or have a high amount of excess body fat are more likely to develop heart disease or suffer a stroke.

Actions:

- Measure your risk by using your waist circumference as a guide. Waist measurements higher than 35 inches for a woman or 40 inches for a man indicate a greater risk of developing diabetes and heart disease.
- Maintain a healthy weight by exercising regularly, eating a balanced diet and, if necessary, joining a formal program for support.
- Work with your doctor and a registered dietitian to create an effective diet and exercise program that will help you lose weight and stay healthy.

Physical Inactivity

Regular physical activity helps to improve your cardiovascular health while reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Exercise can also help to control other risk factors associated with heart disease, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.

Actions:

- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day to maintain good overall health. Choose an activity that involves a moderate level of physical intensity, such as power walking. It is recommended that those who need to lose weight exercise for 60 to 90 minutes each day.
- In addition to aerobic exercise, it is also important to do resistance training twice a week for at least 20 minutes. Consult with your doctor or a personal trainer to learn how to safely incorporate resistance training into your exercise regimen.

Alcohol Use

Drinking alcohol in excess can raise the level of triglycerides in the blood and increase blood pressure. As a result, this may increase the chance of developing heart disease.

Actions:

- Limit your alcohol intake. Women should drink no more than one alcoholic beverage per day, and men should drink no more than two.

Medications and Supplements

Supplements, such as hormone therapy, vitamin C, vitamin E, beta carotene and folic acid, have not been proven to be effective in preventing heart disease. Similarly, the use of aspirin among healthy men and women under the age of 65 has not been shown to prevent heart attacks. However, aspirin can reduce the risk of having a stroke for people over the age of 65.

Actions:

- Take antioxidant vitamin supplements, folic acid and hormone therapy only when prescribed by a doctor.
- Take aspirin only when instructed by a doctor.
- If you do not eat fish at least twice per week, consider taking an omega-3 supplement.

Stress

If left unmanaged, stress can lead to emotional, psychological and even physical problems, including heart disease.

Actions:

Identify the underlying causes of your stress. Then, try to modify your lifestyle or find ways to relax in order to reduce stress.

Sleep Apnea

The inability to breathe properly at night may result in low blood oxygen levels. This can weaken the heart over time and lead to an increased risk of developing an abnormal heart rhythm or heart failure.

Actions:

- If you believe you have sleep apnea, consult with your doctor to ensure your condition is well managed.

Genetics

Family history can play a major role in the development of heart disease.

Actions:

- If your family has a history of heart disease, it is important to notify your doctor and ensure all other risk factors are well controlled.

About the Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute

At the Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute, heart care is a group effort. Our multidisciplinary team of cardiovascular specialists works together to evaluate, diagnose and treat each patient. Through our integrated, patient-centered care model, our vision is to create the most comprehensive facility that encompasses all of our patients' needs and provides the best patient outcomes.

Convenient Service for Cardiovascular Patients

At the Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute, we consider the individual needs of each patient. That is why we provide a multitude of cardiovascular services, including pharmaceutical, rehabilitation, lab testing, imaging services, physician visits and even major surgery. It's all here within the Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute.

Compassion at Our Core

We have created a culture that is compassionate toward our patients' needs and convenient for their concerns. We understand that a heart disease diagnosis can be frightening and even overwhelming. At the Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute, we are here to ease your anxiety and provide you with the most compassionate care available.

Collaborative Cardiovascular Treatment

Our renowned cardiovascular specialists work in collaboration with one another to evaluate, diagnose and communicate with each patient.

Our Quality Promise

Our new model of care promises to serve the needs of patients and families by delivering the highest quality of cardiovascular services in an accommodating environment. We utilize the latest proven techniques, equipment and processes with a focus on quality measures and better patient outcomes.

If you have been diagnosed with a heart condition or believe you may be at risk for heart disease, contact us today to schedule an appointment. Our knowledgeable and experienced cardiology experts are here to help. Make an appointment with an Orlando Health Heart and Vascular Institute physician by calling **(321) 841-6444**.

To learn more, visit
OrlandoHealth.com/Heart

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