



Women: Are You Heart Smart?

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among American women, contrary to a popular misconception that cardiovascular disease is a man's disease. In fact, the American Heart Association reports that nearly 37 percent of all female deaths in the United States occur from heart disease, which includes coronary heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases.

Risk Factors

Some risk factors for heart disease among women cannot be modified. These include increasing age, family history of heart disease or stroke, and personal history of heart attack or stroke.

Fortunately, however, other risk factors for heart disease can be controlled. These include the following:

♥ HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE—

High blood pressure is a significant risk factor for heart attack and stroke. It is important to note that African-American women tend to have higher average blood pressure levels compared to Caucasian women.

♥ HIGH

CHOLESTEROL—High levels of cholesterol in the blood increase one's risk of stroke and contribute to heart disease.

♥ **SMOKING**—The American Heart Association reports that smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States and that smoking is a major cause of cardiovascular heart disease among women.

♥ **OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT**—An abundance of fat in the body puts one at increased risk for diabetes, heart disease and stroke, as well as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

♥ **PHYSICAL INACTIVITY**—Research indicates that cardiovascular disease is nearly twice as likely to develop in inactive people as in people who participate in adequate physical activity.

♥ **DIABETES**—Adults with diabetes have heart disease death rates that are two to four times those of adults without diabetes, according to the American Heart Association.

Additionally, some types of stress response and high triglyceride levels may increase risk for heart disease, and excessive alcohol intake can lead to a variety of conditions including heart failure.

To determine a cardiovascular disease prevention plan that is best for you, consult a physician.



A Mammogram Might Save Your Life.

According to the American Cancer Society, death rates from breast cancer have declined significantly in recent years, most likely due to earlier detection and treatment of the disease. One way breast cancer can be caught early is with a mammogram. The first sign of cancer is often an abnormality that shows up on a mammogram before any change in the breast can be felt by the woman or her doctor.

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Give yourself the advantage that digital mammography offers. Call the RMC Breast Health Center at 803-395-2841 to schedule an appointment today.