



This project is supported by the University of Ottawa Heart Institute's Patient Alumni Association.

Heart attack symptoms are not recognized in over 50% of women.

Heart attack symptoms most often felt by women:

- Chest pain, pressure, tightness, or burning
- Pain in the jaw, neck, right arm, or back
- Extreme sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Stomach pain, nausea or indigestion

Other symptoms women may feel:

- Profound fatigue
- Sleep problems
- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Fast or irregular heartbeat

Women are more likely to present with 3 or more symptoms in addition to chest pain.



If you think you are having a heart attack, get help right away. **If possible, call 911. Do not drive yourself.**

Women and men can have different types of heart disease.

Common types of heart disease:

- Cholesterol build-up in heart blood vessels (coronary artery disease)
- Leaky or stiff heart valves affecting blood flow (valvular heart disease)
- Irregular or rapid heartbeat (arrhythmia)

Women are more likely to have:

- Tear in large blood vessels of the heart (spontaneous coronary artery dissection, SCAD)
- Tightening of the large blood vessels of the heart, limiting blood flow (coronary vasospasm)
- Small vessel disease (microvascular dysfunction)
- Weakened heart due to a stressful event (Takotsubo cardiomyopathy)
- Weakened heart during or after pregnancy (peripartum cardiomyopathy)



Some healthcare providers may be **less aware of the differences** between women and men.



Heart disease is largely preventable.

What can you do to reduce your risk?

- Be active, keep moving
- Eat a variety of healthy foods
- Manage stress
- Live free from commercial tobacco and vaping
- Limit alcohol
- Get regular check ups (test for blood sugars, blood pressure and cholesterol)

Women can be at greater risk for heart disease.

The following conditions lead to a greater risk of heart disease:

- Certain pregnancy complications
- Earlier menopause (before the age of 45)
- Cysts in ovaries and hormonal imbalance (polycystic ovarian syndrome)
- Inflammatory and autoimmune disorders (ex. rheumatoid arthritis, lupus)
- Cigarette smoking
- Diabetes



TO TAKE CARE OF OTHERS,
YOU NEED TO FIRST TAKE
CARE OF YOURSELF.

START THE CONVERSATION.

To support and to learn more about women's heart health, symptoms, causes, risks and what you can do, visit WearRedCanada.ca or talk to your healthcare provider.



HEART DISEASE IN WOMEN

DID YOU KNOW?



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