



## Could I be at Risk?

Your family history and genetics are key risk factors for heart disease. Other important risk factors include:

- High blood pressure
  - High cholesterol
  - Smoking
  - Diabetes
  - Overweight and obesity
  - Poor diet
  - Lack of exercise
  - Heavy drinking
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## Symptoms

Heart attacks and strokes have several major warning signs and symptoms. Many people don't recognize all of them.

The symptoms of a heart attack include:

- Chest pain or discomfort.
- Pain or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw or upper stomach.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea (feeling "sick to your stomach").
- Feeling lightheaded.
- Cold sweats.

Symptoms of stroke include:

- Suddenly feeling numb or weak in your face, arm, or leg — especially on one side of the body.
- Suddenly feeling confused, having trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Suddenly having trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Suddenly having trouble walking, feeling dizzy, or losing your balance or coordination..
- Suddenly having a severe headache with no known cause.

If you or anybody else has any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.

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## Prevention and Treatment

Heart disease is a serious condition. There is one main way to prevent or reduce the effects of heart disease. Simply live a healthy lifestyle, no matter how old you are. Here are some other ways you can help prevent heart disease or reduce your risk:

- Choose healthy meals and snacks. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eat foods that are high in fiber and low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Limit salt or sodium in your diet.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't smoke. If you don't smoke, don't start.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol.

If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, there are steps you can take to lower your risk for heart disease.

- Have your cholesterol checked. Your health care provider should test your [cholesterol levels](#) at least once every five years. Talk with your doctor about this simple blood test.
- Monitor your blood pressure. High blood pressure has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis.
- Manage your diabetes. If you have diabetes, closely monitor your blood sugar levels. Talk with your health care provider about treatment options.
- Take your medicine. If you're taking medication to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Talk with your health care provider. You and your doctor can work together to prevent or treat the medical conditions that lead to heart disease. Discuss your treatment plan regularly and bring a list of questions to your appointments.