

What men should learn about heart disease

Heart disease has remained the leading cause of death for men in the United States for the last century. It's also the second leading cause of death among men in Canada. Despite significant medical breakthroughs in recent years, the American Heart Association 2026 Statistical Update reveals approximately 54 percent of adult males currently live with some form of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

High burden for men

The overall burden for CVD remains high. CVD claims the lives of more than 350,000 men annually, says Kirby Medical Center. Men need to know about heart health so they can take proactive steps to protect themselves against CVD. One thing to realize is that a man's risk begins to climb sharply around age 35, according to Northwestern University. On average, men develop coronary heart disease a full decade earlier than women. Many men miss the window to catch rising blood pressure or cholesterol that can lead to future damage.

Recognizing symptoms

Men are more likely to experience the textbook symptoms of a heart attack than women. Still, these symptoms may be ignored. Here are some key signs, courtesy of Brown University Health.

- Intense chest pain: A crushing pain, often described as an elephant sitting on the chest.
- Radiating pain: Discomfort may move to the left arm, jaw or neck.
- Shortness of breath: Difficulty breathing, even while resting.

Prevention strategies

The AHA says up to 80 percent of heart disease cases are preventable with some simple lifestyle adjustments. Clinical focus has shifted toward the following advice.

- Reduce noise exposure. Reducing exposure to high levels of transportation and industrial noise can help, as noise is linked to chronic hypertension, according to Labcorp.
- Avoid sleep extremes. It's important to get between seven and eight hours of sleep each night. Less than five hours or more than 10 hours is directly linked to higher coronary event risks, says UChicago Medicine.
- Manage CKM syndrome. The AMA says CKM syndrome is a systemic disorder defined by an interconnection between obesity, diabetes, kidney disease, and heart disease. Left untreated, it can progress to organ failure, heart attack or stroke.

Early screening for CVD is advised for men so they can head off potential heart problems.



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1501 Burnett Road | Brownwood, Texas 76801 | 325-646-8541 | hendrickhealth.org

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