

The Heart of the Matter: Heart Disease

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for women and men in the United States.

How can I prevent heart disease?

Keep a healthy lifestyle!

- ▶ Stop smoking.
- ▶ Eat a diet low in fat and salt.
- ▶ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ▶ Exercise at least 3 times a week.
- ▶ Have your cholesterol and blood pressure checked when you go to the doctor.

Go to the hospital if you feel:

- ▶ Pain, pressure or a squeezing feeling in the center of the chest
- ▶ Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Lightheadedness or fainting
- ▶ Sweating

When these things happen, it may mean your heart disease has caused a heart attack. Not all of these symptoms occur in every person who has a heart attack. If you have some of these symptoms, get help right away.

What is a heart attack?

A heart attack occurs when the heart doesn't get the blood it needs. This results when vessels that carry blood to the heart are blocked. When this happens, part of the heart muscle dies and no longer works as it should.

How is a heart attack treated?

If a person gets to the hospital within 1 to 3 hours, a drug can be given that helps blood flow to the heart. Surgery may take place as well.

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.

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For more information about women's health issues, stop by our Resource Center at 2000 West First Street, Piedmont Plaza II, 1st Floor, Winston Salem, NC 27104, visit our website at <http://www.wakehealth.edu/WHCOE/> or contact us at (336) 713-4220.