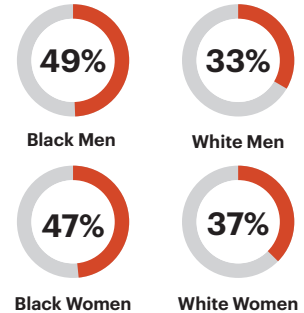


Black Americans and Heart Disease

Heart disease is the #1 killer for all Americans², and stroke is also a leading cause of death. And the risks of getting heart disease or having a stroke are even higher for Black Americans—especially Black women.

The good news is, you can improve your odds of preventing and beating these diseases by understanding the risks and taking simple steps to address them.

We're here to help you understand the differences, take steps to prevent CAD, spot possible signs of it early, or get treatment for the condition if you have it.



Black men and women have higher rates of heart disease than White men and women²

What Is Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)?

Coronary artery disease, or CAD, happens when cholesterol-containing deposits (plaque) build up on the inner walls of coronary arteries over time. This causes the arteries to harden and narrow, which decreases blood flow to the heart. As a result, your heart doesn't get the blood, oxygen and nutrients it needs, which can lead to chest pain or other symptoms. In some cases, it can lead to a heart attack which is caused when the heart muscle dies because of the absence of blood flow.¹

The build-up of plaque can be attributed to poor lifestyle habits such as smoking and obesity, but it can also be caused by such as aging or a family history of heart disease.

Common Symptoms of Coronary Artery Disease

You may feel heart disease symptoms during stress, physical activity or even at rest. It is more common to experience these symptoms while walking, going up stairs or moving around. It is important to note that women often do not exhibit the same symptoms as men when having a heart attack. If you feel these symptoms, seek help from a health care provider immediately.

Common Symptoms



Chest Pain or Pressure (Angina)



Fatigue

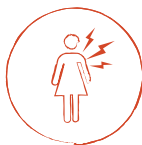


Shortness of Breath



Sudden Profuse Sweating

Common Symptoms for Women²



Discomfort in Back, Shoulders, Arms, Jaw, Neck



Insomnia or Inability to Sleep



Shortness of Breath



Lightheadedness or Dizziness

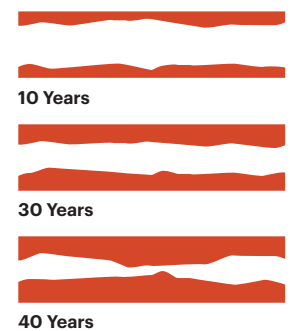


Nausea or Vomiting



High blood pressure is a leading cause of heart attacks and stroke; About 2 out of every 5 Black American adults have high blood pressure, and less than half of them have it under control³

Images depict build up of plaque in an artery over time



Black Americans and Heart Disease

Reducing Your Risks

There are things you can do to reduce the risk of having a heart attack, like quitting smoking, taking steps to lower cholesterol, exercising regularly, keeping diabetes and high blood pressure under control and seeing your doctor regularly.



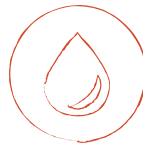
Quit Smoking



Lower Cholesterol



Exercise Regularly



Control Diabetes and High Blood Pressure



Visit Doctor Regularly

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

If you are experiencing any symptoms or know that you have certain risk factors, use these questions as a starting point when talking with your doctor, to help the two of you determine how you can access the care you need.

- Could I have a heart problem?
- What caused my heart problem?
- What treatments do I need? What are the side effects?
- What should I do if my symptoms get worse quickly?
- What can I do to prevent this from getting worse?
- Should I eat different foods?
- How will this affect my day-to-day activities, such as working, or caring for my children or grandchildren?
- What can I do to feel less stress and worry?
- How often do I need to come in for an office visit?

Sources

1. NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/lcod/men/2015/black/index.htm> Accessed September 2019
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5. Cleveland Clinic: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17645-women--cardiovascular-disease> Accessed September 2019