

What is Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (ASCVD)?

Atherosclerosis is the gradual buildup of *fatty cholesterol deposits* in blood vessels that can form larger *plaques*.

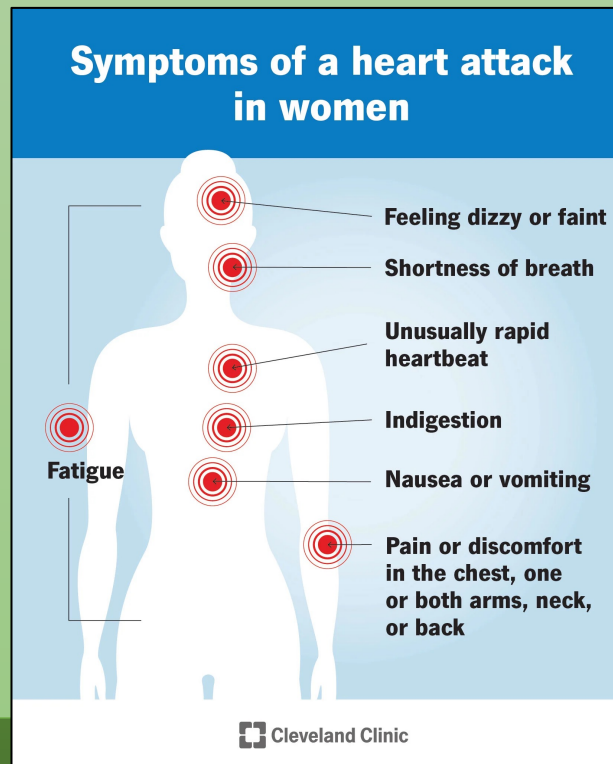
Over time, cholesterol plaques can decrease blood flow and completely obstruct oxygen and nutrient delivery to major organs, including the heart (leading to angina, heart attack) and brain (leading to stroke).

Doctors use the ASCVD Risk Estimator to calculate 10-year risk of having a first heart attack or stroke.

Recognizing ASCVD in Women

ASCVD is traditionally considered a “male disease”, yet it is the leading cause of mortality in women.

Along with characteristic *chest pressure*, many women report atypical signs – unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath – *often ~1 month prior to a heart attack*.



Listen to Her Heart:

Raising Awareness and Promoting Early Recognition, Prevention, and Treatment of Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease in Women

An Educational Pamphlet for Patients Developed by:

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Understanding ASCVD Risk Factors:

Traditional	Hypertension High Cholesterol Diabetes Smoking
Risk-enhancing	Chronic Inflammation Autoimmune Disease
Female-specific	Menopause <40 years old Preeclampsia/pre-term labor Gestational diabetes

What Lifestyle Changes Can You Make?



According to the American Heart Association, achieving ideal ranges in **>5** of these areas can reduce ASCVD risk by **50%**.

Behaviors	Factors
Healthy diet	Blood pressure
Physical activity	Blood sugar
Get healthy sleep	Cholesterol
Quit smoking	Healthy weight

Heart-to-Heart: Discussing ASCVD with Your Doctor

All patients should feel supported and encouraged while talking about any symptoms they are experiencing.

It is helpful to describe your symptoms, pain, or discomfort along with how they affect your daily activities, how long they have been occurring, and what makes them better or worse.

Check in with your doctor about anything helping or hurting your progress towards reaching your health improvement goals.

Medical Management of ASCVD

Statins are a class of medications commonly prescribed by physicians as primary prevention for heart attack and stroke.

Statins treat high cholesterol by working directly on the liver to block the production of LDL ("bad cholesterol").

Side effects of Statins often include muscle pain, digestive upset, and rarely liver damage, but it is important to consult your doctor before starting or stopping any medications.

YOU FIRST

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Ask your doctor if you are eligible for women's heart disease screening, prevention, and nutrition/fitness services.



Breast Cancer Screening

- Starting at age 50 (unless recommended sooner)
- Breast exam every year
- Mammogram every other year (or as often as recommended)
- Additional testing as needed



Heart Health Screening

- Members ages 30-64
- Blood pressure
- Height and weight
- Cholesterol testing
- Blood sugar testing



Cervical Cancer Screening

- Pap test every 3 years (or as often as recommended)
- HPV test
- Additional testing as needed



Lifestyle Programs and Fitness Options

- Health coaching
- Weight Watchers™
- TOPS™ (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly)
- Self-Monitored Blood Pressure Program
- Local fitness centers

800-508-2222

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