

HEART DISEASE AND DIABETES

MEN VS. WOMEN

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Heat disease is the No. 1 cause of death in both men and women, and people with diabetes are at a higher risk for heart disease than those without diabetes. Even though women and men with diabetes have the same risk of getting heart disease, women and men are different when it comes to heart disease and diabetes in some of the following ways:

Studies have shown that women with diabetes tend to be heavier and have poorer blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels than men. This also raises their risk for heart disease.

Women may have different symptoms from men when they are having a heart attack. A woman may not know she is having a heart attack as readily as a man who is having chest pain. A woman is less likely to have chest pain and may have back or jaw pain instead, or she may just feel short of breath or nauseated. As you know, the sooner people get help for a heart attack, the greater their chances for survival. The woman and those around them may not realize that it is a heart attack until it is too late.

Women are less likely to be tested for and treated for heart disease than men. Because heart disease was often thought of as a “man’s disease,” it was ignored or treated less aggressively than in women. As heart disease in women gets more attention in the media and more research funding, this belief is changing. Even though men are more likely to be treated for heart disease, some studies show that men are less likely to take medicines as prescribed or follow up with doctor visits and testing.

Women who don’t have diabetes tend not to get heart disease until after menopause because the hormones made in their bodies before menopause protect them from heart disease. However, women with diabetes don’t have the same protection from these hormones. Therefore, they have lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels, which raises their risk for heart disease.

Clinical depression is about twice as common for women and is more common among people with diabetes. Having depression increases the risk for having a heart attack and heart disease.

HEALTHY ADVICE FOR MEN AND WOMEN

When it comes to your health, you need to watch out for yourself and make sure your doctor is watching out for you, as well. Keep track of your own blood pressure, cholesterol

and A1C levels. Be sure that your levels are checked every year. Ask your healthcare provider what your numbers are and what they mean. Follow through with testing and

medicines and keep your blood pressure and blood glucose in their target ranges. There is no getting around the fact that heart disease is a serious concern for both men and women

with diabetes. However, more understanding and better treatments mean that both women and men with diabetes are living longer, healthier lives.

SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

FOR MEN AND WOMEN

- Chest pain
- Pain in the upper body (arm, back, neck)

- Shortness of breath

MORE COMMON FOR WOMEN

- Nausea
- Light headedness or dizziness
- Fatigue

