

## wellness

# What women should know about heart disease

Men and women share the same risk factors for heart disease, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, lack of physical activity, and smoking. But many women may be unaware of the warning signs, and there are a number of important gender differences to know about as well.

"Women tend to be more worried about cancer—especially breast cancer—than about heart disease," says David Rubinstein, MD, MPH, Director of Cardiology at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst. "In fact, studies show that only about 50 percent of women today know the risks associated with cardiovascular disease."

## Know The Differences

Research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a woman's heart tends to work differently than a man's heart. For instance:

- Women tend to develop coronary heart disease 10 years later than men.
- Coronary microvascular disease, a form

of heart disease that affects the heart's smallest arteries, is more common in women.

- Women are more likely than

men to die after experiencing a heart attack.

- Obesity, a risk factor for heart disease, is more common in

women (38.3 percent) than men (34.3 percent). Women commonly have more health problems related to obesity than men.

- Women have risk factors of heart disease related to pregnancy that don't exist for men. Preeclampsia (high blood pressure during pregnancy) and gestational diabetes (symptoms of diabetes during pregnancy) may increase a woman's chance of heart disease later in life.

## Take Care Of Yourself

Many women worry about their family's health before their own. If you are a mother, the next time you take your child to get his or her regular checkup, schedule an appointment with your own doctor as well.

"Risk factors of cardiovascular disease have not decreased in women as much as they have in men," says Dr. Rubinstein. "This shows us many women are still not addressing their heart health. It's important for women who may be at risk of heart disease to share their concerns with their physicians."

To learn more about cardiology services at NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst, visit [www.nychealthandhospitals.org/elmhurst](http://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/elmhurst) or call 718-334-5058.



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