

Understanding Cardiovascular Disease

What is CVD?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes all diseases related to the heart or blood vessels in the body. Some of these diseases are:

- Coronary heart disease: heart blood vessel disease
- Congestive heart failure: heart that's not pumping blood normally
- Peripheral vascular disease: disease or disorders affecting the blood vessels in the arms and legs

What are the signs and symptoms of CVD?

CVD signs and symptoms vary depending on the type of heart or blood vessel disease you have. Some of these signs and symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fast or irregular heart beat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or fainting
- Fatigue
- Swelling of ankles or feet
- Sudden numbness or weakness in face, arms, or legs
- Sudden weight gain
- Tenderness or pain in the back of lower legs

If you have any of these symptoms, see your doctor for testing. Heart disease is easier to treat if it's detected early.

How do you manage CVD?

CVD is managed differently based on the disease. Important tips to remember include:

- Follow a heart healthy diet that's low in fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Exercise 30 minutes each day.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Avoid or stop smoking.
- Keep your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels under control.
- Take your medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Find ways to manage your stress.



Risk Factors

The following may increase your chances of getting CVD:

- Physical inactivity
- Overweight and obesity
- High fat diet
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Age
- Family history
- Stress

Complications

Complications of CVD can be serious and even deadly. They include:

- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Aneurysm
- Peripheral artery disease
- Sudden cardiac arrest

2/28/2011