

FACE THE HEART *truth*

ABOUT YOUR RISKS

Every year, heart disease takes the lives of one in three American women. It's the #1 killer of women, regardless of race or ethnicity. It also strikes at younger ages than most people think, and the risk rises in middle age.

Heart disease can diminish health, well-being, and the ability to do even simple activities like climbing stairs. The fact is, it can decrease your entire quality of life. Two-thirds of women who have heart attacks never fully recover. And, if you have a heart attack, your risk of having another increases.

Act now to protect your heart.



National Institutes of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

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THE HEART
truth
FOR WOMEN



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



ROSARIO

AGE: 43

"I recently had a physical and was surprised to hear my doctor say I have several risk factors for heart disease. I also saw a TV special about heart disease and learned that I have more risks, so it all really hit home. I'm concerned about this and want to change it. I've been told I have to lose weight and reduce my cholesterol. I know it won't be easy, but I know I have to do it."

PAULA

AGE: 45



"In 1991, I went to the ER with chest pains twice in one week. They said it was ulcers. The pain became excruciating. Again, the ER said there was nothing they could do. I refused to leave and was admitted for observation. Later, the cardiologist on duty saw my EKG and asked, 'Where's the 34-year-old who had the massive heart attack?' I had emergency surgery. But the damage was done; only 40 percent of my heart muscle functions. I am permanently disabled and had to quit a job I loved. They thought I was too young to have a heart attack."



ANN

AGE: 58

"In 1994, at 50, I had a heart attack. One evening I felt pressure in my chest and tingling down both arms. I remember saying, 'It feels like I'm having a heart attack.' The next morning, I still had a strange sensation in my chest. I called the doctor and was sent to the hospital. After 10 days of tests, I had an angioplasty to open three clogged arteries. Considering how many first heart attacks are fatal, I was lucky to be alive the following morning to seek medical help."

For additional information:

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth, 301-592-8573, TTY: 240-629-3255

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org/simpleolutions, 1-888-MYHEART

WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

www.womenheart.org, 202-728-7199

**Office on Women's Health, DHHS
National Women's Health Information Center**

www.4women.gov, 1-800-994-WOMAN, TTD: 1-888-220-5446

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

FOR THE *heart* TRUTH

Know the risk factors for heart disease: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, being overweight, being physically inactive, age (55 or older for women), and having a family history of early heart disease. Talk to your doctor. Find out your risks. And take action to lower them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1. What is my risk for heart disease?
2. What screening or diagnostic tests for heart disease do I need?
3. What are my numbers and what do they mean?
 - Blood pressure
 - Cholesterol—total cholesterol, LDL ("bad") cholesterol, HDL ("good") cholesterol, and triglycerides
 - Body mass index and waist circumference measurement
 - Blood sugar level (could indicate risk for diabetes)
4. What can you do to help me quit smoking?
5. How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?
6. What is a heart healthy eating plan for me?



The Heart Truth campaign is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with: American Heart Association; Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease; and other organizations committed to the health and well-being of women.