

# About Heart Disease

## **What is heart disease?**

The term “heart disease” refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type of heart disease in the United States is [coronary artery disease](#) (CAD), which affects the blood flow to the heart. Decreased blood flow can cause a heart attack.

## **What are the symptoms of heart disease?**

Sometimes heart disease may be “silent” and not diagnosed until a person experiences signs or symptoms of a heart attack, heart failure, or an arrhythmia. When these events happen, symptoms may include<sup>1</sup>

- [Heart attack](#): Chest pain or discomfort, upper back or neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, dizziness, and shortness of breath.
- Arrhythmia: Fluttering feelings in the chest (palpitations).
- [Heart failure](#): Shortness of breath, fatigue, or swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, abdomen, or neck veins.

## **Learn the Facts About Heart Disease**

- About **695,000** people in the United States died from heart disease in 2021—that’s **1 in every 5 deaths**.<sup>1,2</sup>

► [Heart Disease Facts](#)

## **What are the risk factors for heart disease?**

High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease. About half of people in the United States (47%) have at least one of these three risk factors.<sup>2</sup> Several other medical conditions and lifestyle choices can also put people at a higher risk for heart disease, including

- [Diabetes](#)
- [Overweight and obesity](#)
- [Unhealthy diet](#)
- [Physical inactivity](#)
- [Excessive alcohol use](#)

► Learn about how [heart disease and mental health disorders are related](#).

### **Learn more about heart disease, heart attack, and related conditions:**

- [Coronary Artery Disease](#)
- [Heart Attack](#)
- [Men and Heart Disease](#)
- [Women and Heart Disease](#)
- [Other Related Conditions](#)

### **What is cardiac rehabilitation?**

[Cardiac rehabilitation](#) (rehab) is an important program for anyone recovering from a heart attack, heart failure, or some types of heart surgery. Cardiac rehab is a supervised program that includes

- Physical activity
- Education about healthy living, including healthy eating, taking medicine as prescribed, and ways to help you quit smoking
- Counseling to find ways to relieve stress and improve mental health

A team of people may help you through cardiac rehab, including your health care team, exercise and nutrition specialists, physical therapists, and counselors or mental health professionals.

► [Test your knowledge of heart disease](#)

### **CDC's Public Health Efforts Related to Heart Disease**

- [State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases](#)
- [Million Hearts](#)
- [WISEWOMAN](#)

## More Information

- [American Heart Association](#)
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)

## References

1. National Center for Health Statistics. [Multiple Cause of Death 2018–2021 on CDC WONDER Database](#). Accessed February 2, 2023.
2. Tsao CW, Aday AW, Almarzooq ZI, Beaton AZ, Bittencourt MS, Boehme AK, et al. [Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2023 Update: A Report From the American Heart Association](#). *Circulation*. 2023;147:e93–e621.
3. Virani SS, Alonso A, Aparicio HJ, Benjamin EJ, Bittencourt MS, Callaway CW, et al. [Heart disease and stroke statistics—2021 update: a report from the American Heart Association](#). *Circulation*. 2021;143:e254–e743.

Article Source

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Source URL

<https://www.cdc.gov>

Last Reviewed

Friday, January 12, 2024