

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 include¹

- [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**.^{1,2}

► [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.² 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.

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