



Health and Wellness Program



PARTNERING
WITH



LIVING WITH CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE (CAD)

Just like any other muscle, the heart requires the right amount of blood supply to work right. The heart pumps oxygen-rich blood throughout the body. The heart gets its blood supply from the coronary arteries. When the coronary arteries become narrow or blocked, the heart does not get the oxygen it needs. This condition is called Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). High blood pressure can lead to narrowing of the coronary arteries. The build up of cholesterol and fatty deposits can block the flow of blood through the coronary arteries.

Conditions that affect your heart

If you have coronary artery disease, you may have or be at risk for:

- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Peripheral artery disease (PAD) (arteries outside the heart and brain)
- Heart failure
- Heart attack
- Stroke



High blood pressure

About one in three adults in the U.S. has high blood pressure. Many people do not have any symptoms so they may go for years without knowing they have it. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack, kidney or eye disease. High blood pressure is most common in people over age 35, but can occur at any age. People with diabetes, gout or kidney disease are more likely to also have high blood pressure. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80. High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. If your blood pressure falls somewhere in between, you have prehypertension.

Obesity

Obesity is a major risk factor for coronary artery disease.

- It raises blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- It also lowers HDL "good" cholesterol.
- It also raises blood pressure levels.

Obesity is caused by taking in more calories than the body can use. Women with a waist measurement of 35 inches or more are at risk for obesity. Men with a waist measurement of 40 inches or more are at risk for obesity.

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Peripheral artery disease

The most common cause of PAD is the build up of cholesterol and fatty deposits in the arteries outside the heart and brain. If there is a blockage in one of the peripheral arteries, blood flow may be partially or completely cut off. Lack of blood flow causes pain, changes in skin color, sores, trouble walking, or even loss of a limb.

Heart failure

Over five million Americans live with heart failure. Heart failure is a condition in which the heart is unable to pump enough to meet the body's needs for blood and oxygen. Heart failure can cause swelling in the ankles or fluid collection in the lungs. Fluid in the lungs causes shortness of breath. Heart failure also affects the kidneys' ability to get rid of sodium and water.

Heart attack

A heart attack occurs when the blood flow to the heart is severely reduced or cut off. This happens when fatty deposits build up in the coronary arteries. Symptoms of a heart attack are:

- Chest discomfort in the center of the chest that feels like pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain
- Discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Cold sweat
- Nausea
- Lightheadedness

Stroke

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that leads to the brain is blocked off or bursts. When this happens, oxygen to the brain is cut off, and the brain cells begin to die. A stroke affects certain parts of the brain. The body function that is controlled by this part of the brain is affected, and may not work as it once did. Warning signs of a stroke are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion
- Sudden trouble speaking
- Sudden trouble understanding others
- Sudden trouble seeing out of one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking (loss of balance or coordination)
- Sudden dizziness
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Heart attacks and strokes are medical emergencies. If you have symptoms of either of these conditions, you should call 911 right away.

Recommended care for patients with CAD

If you have CAD it is important to see your provider regularly. It's also important to follow these recommendations.

- **Blood pressure.** Be sure to have your blood pressure checked at each visit with your provider. Take any blood pressure medications exactly as prescribed.

- **Cholesterol.** Too much cholesterol in the blood is a major risk for CAD and can lead to heart attack and for stroke. Have your cholesterol checked at least yearly.
- **Healthy diet.** Eat foods that are low in fat, cholesterol and salt. If you don't already have a meal plan, talk to your provider about the DASH diet.
- **Stay active.** Being physically active lowers your blood pressure, makes your heart stronger and helps to prevent a heart attack. Always talk to your provider first before starting any new activity.
- **Control your weight.** If you are overweight, talk to your provider about a weight loss program that is right for you.
- **Avoid tobacco.** If you smoke or use other tobacco products, you are 2-3 times more likely to have a heart attack. Quit smoking. Talk to your provider about ways to help you stop smoking or using smokeless tobacco.
- **Pneumonia and flu vaccines.** If you have CAD, you are at higher risk for problems from pneumonia and the flu. Get a pneumonia vaccine once or as suggested by your provider. Get a flu vaccine every year in the fall.
- **Join a cardiac disease management program.** Joining in a cardiac disease management program provides education, support and tips on managing CAD.
- **Manage stress and depression.** If you have a chronic illness like CAD, you may feel stressed or down. Speak to your provider about ways to help decrease these symptoms.

Resources

American Heart Association

Si no habla o lea inglés llámé al 1-800-447-6804 para solicitar asistencia. Podemos asistirle si no habla o no comprende inglés.