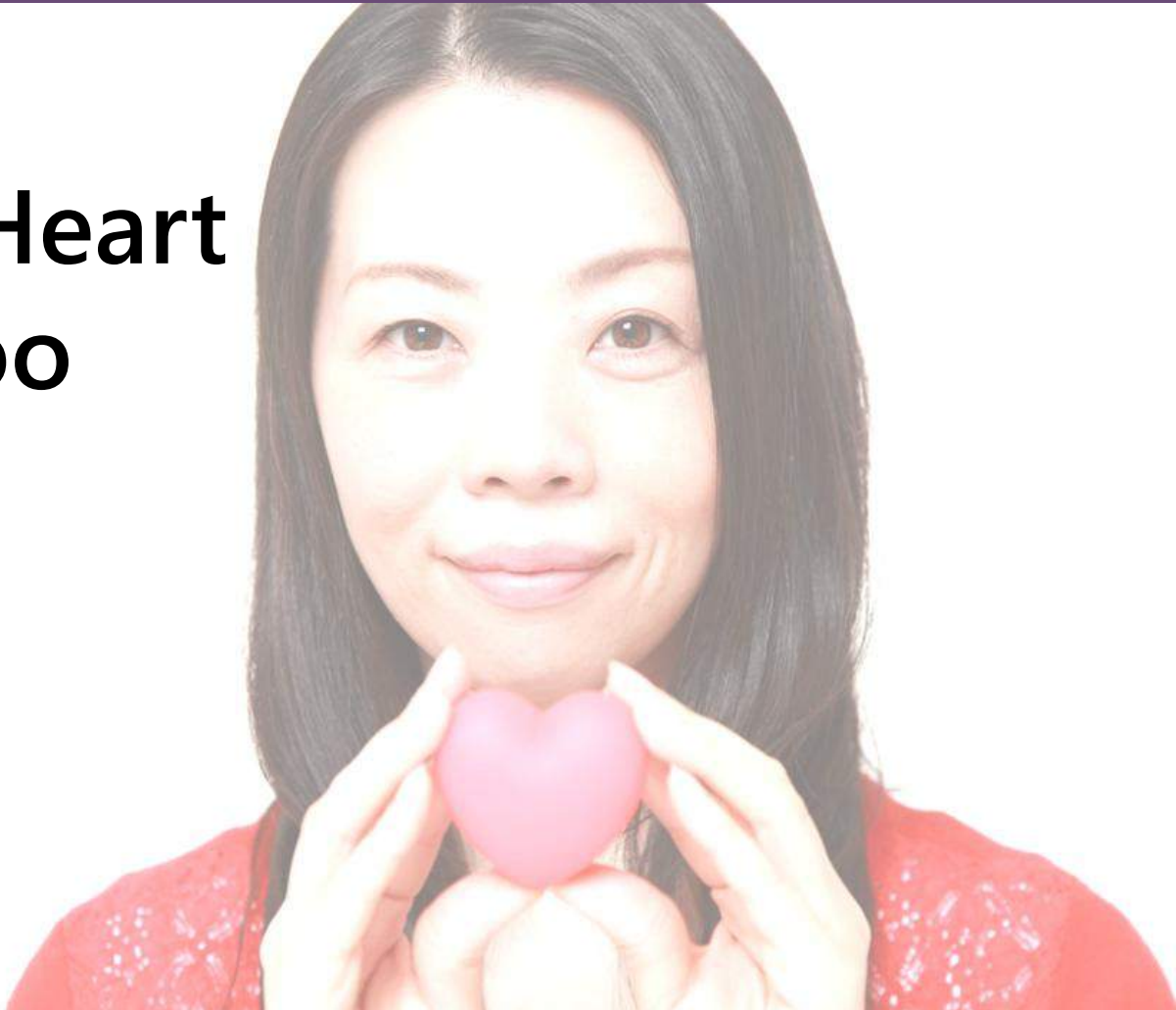




CANADIAN WOMEN'S
HEART HEALTH CENTRE

Because Her Heart Matters Too





CANADIAN WOMEN'S
HEART HEALTH CENTRE

OUR VISION

To provide leadership in the development, implementation and evaluation of cardiovascular prevention and management strategies to improve women's cardiovascular health.





CANADIAN WOMEN'S
HEART HEALTH CENTRE

ADVOCACY



Transforming public attitudes through educating, empowering and supporting individuals and communities





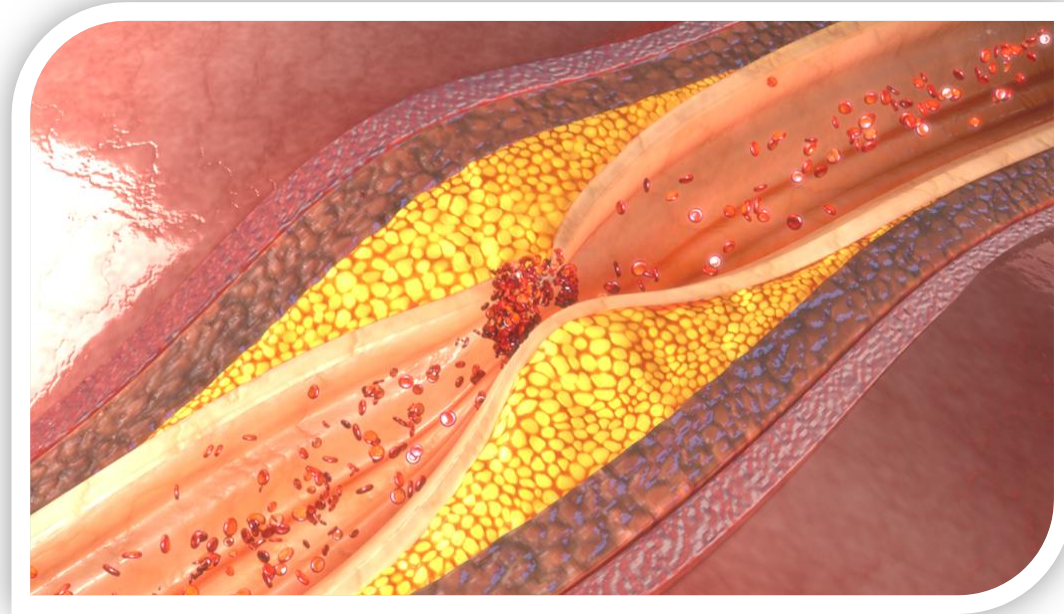
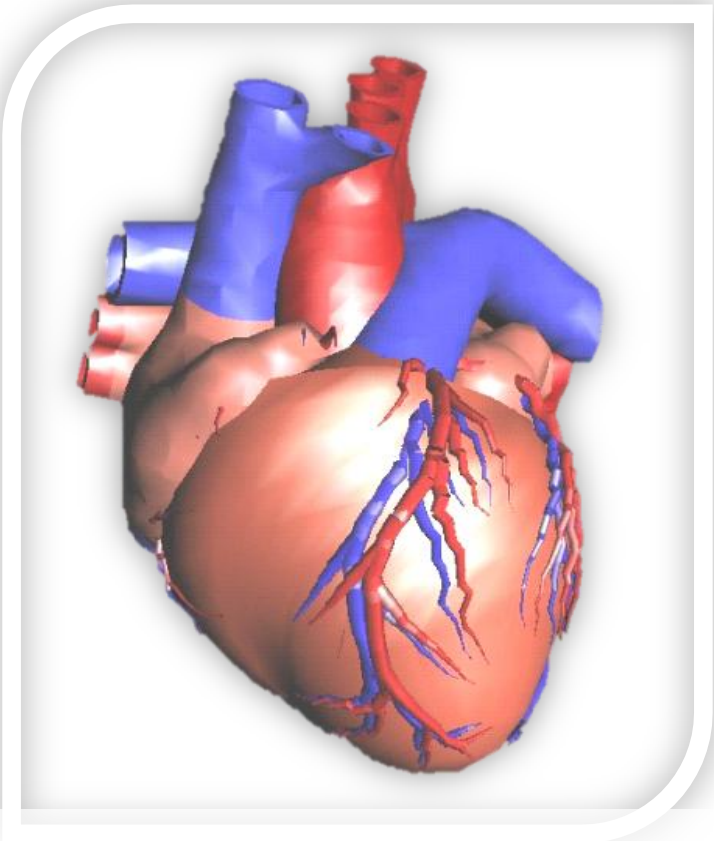
Any information provided in this presentation by your women's heart health advocate should not be considered medical advice and is not intended as a substitute for medical professional help, advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider with any questions you have regarding your medical care.

The views and testimonials expressed by a women's heart health advocate or any other participant are his/her personal views and the University of Ottawa Heart Institute does not guarantee the accuracy or appropriateness of the opinions or advice expressed by women's heart health advocates.



At the end of this session you will be able to:

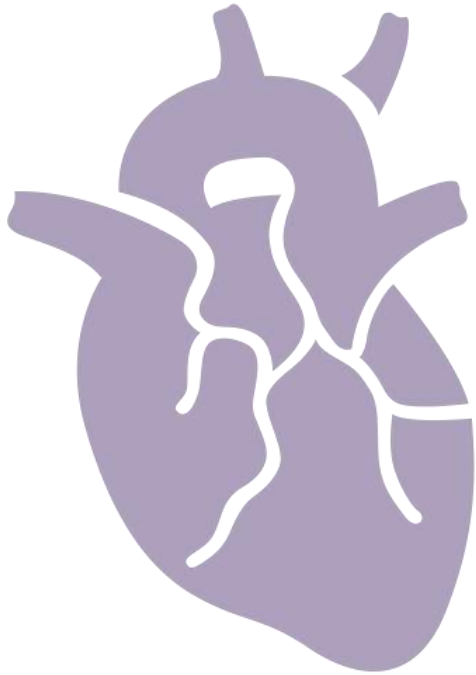
1. Describe what heart disease is.
2. Describe how heart disease is different in women, including signs and symptoms.
3. Explain the risks for heart disease.
4. Describe how you can take heart health action.
5. Discuss tips for talking with your health care providers.
6. List key messages.



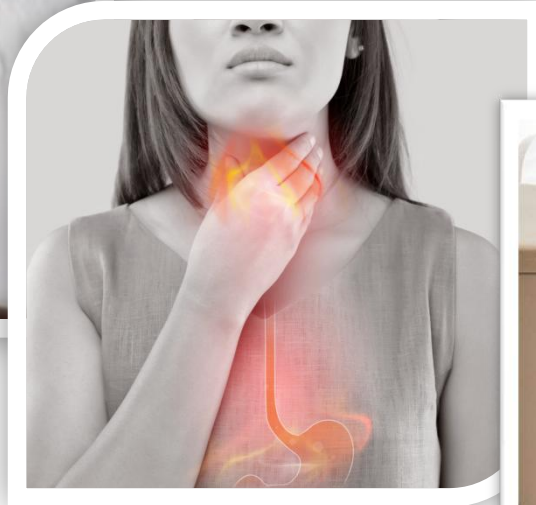
What is Heart Disease?



What is Heart Disease?



- Also known as cardiovascular disease
- A general term for a variety of conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels.
- Can lead to heart attack and even death
- First cause of death worldwide
- Second leading cause of death in Canada



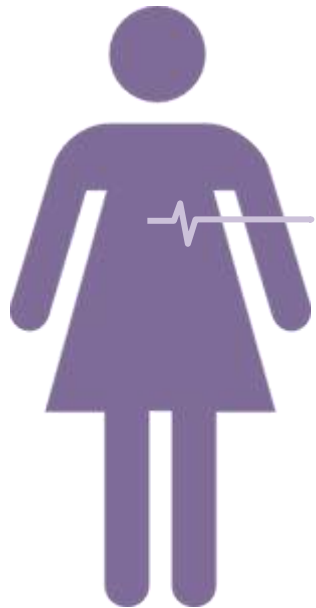
Are Women's Hearts Really That Different?

How is heart disease different in women?

What are the signs and symptoms?



Important facts:



- Heart disease claims the life of **1 in 3** women.
- One Canadian woman dies from heart disease every **20 minutes**.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of **premature death** in Canadian women.
- Heart disease kills **5x** as many women as breast cancer.
- Heart events are **increasing among women 35-55 years**.
- 1/3 of women who have heart disease try to resume their pre-diagnosis lifestyles. But heart disease is a condition that **requires lifelong management**.



A male and female heart look the same overall, but...



- women's hearts are **smaller**
- women's hearts **beat faster**
- women's coronary arteries are **smaller**
- women's plaque build up is **different**
- women's hearts are affected by **hormonal changes**

As a result, some risk factors are **unique**
to each men and women



When it comes to heart disease, women are ...

- Under-**researched**
- Under-**diagnosed**
- Under-**treated**
- Under-**supported**
- Under-**aware**



Source: [Heart and Stroke Report, February](#), 2018



2/3

of heart disease
clinical research
focuses on **MEN**

WHY?

- **Safety concerns**
- **Hormone fluctuations**
- **Lack of participation**

Source: [Heart and Stroke Report, February 2018](#)



Women are slow to identify the signs and symptoms of a heart event



Early heart attack signs are missed in **78% of women.**

WHY?

Women delay seeking help due to fear, embarrassment, living alone, not wanting to bother anyone, or misinterpretation of signs and symptoms

Every minute counts.

Getting treatment as fast as possible is critical to survival and to minimize damage.



Common Signs & Symptoms in Women



Chest pain or discomfort. This can feel like a pressure, tightness, heaviness, squeezing, burning, or gripping pain or discomfort



Pain radiating from chest to the neck, jaw, left arm and/or back, stomach



Stomach pain or discomfort, or feelings of indigestion



Unusual shortness of breath



Unusual or extreme fatigue



Dizziness or lightheadedness



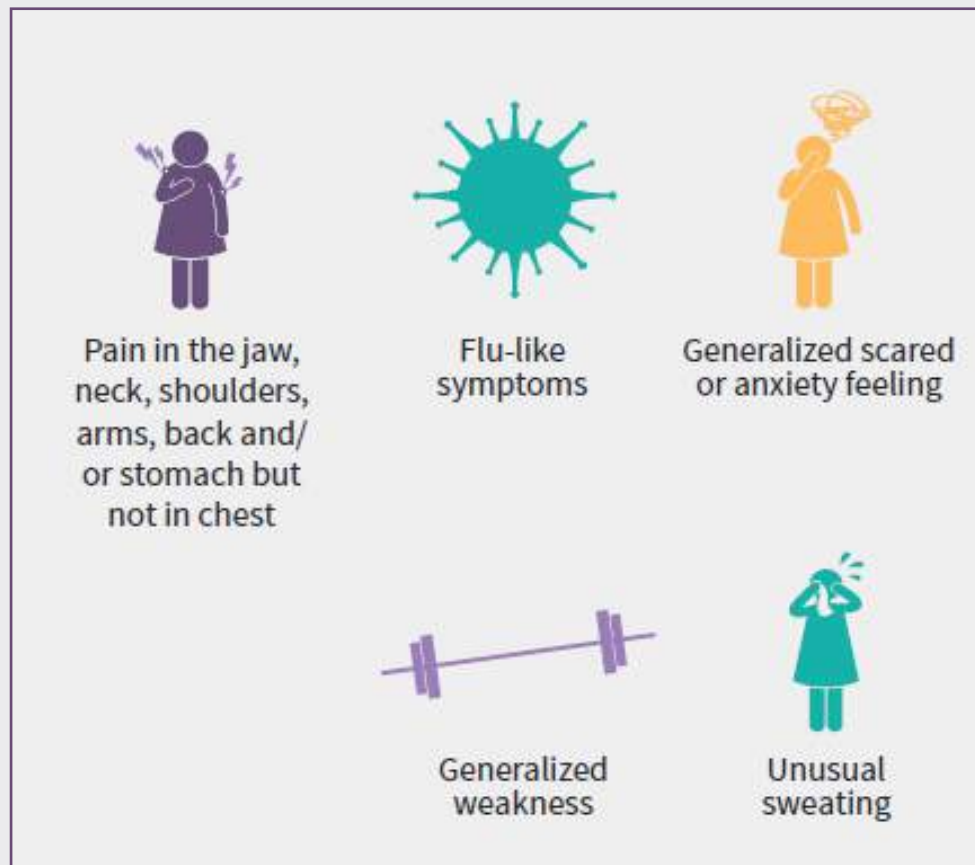
An irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia)



Nausea and/or vomiting



Uncommon Signs & Symptoms in Women





There has been lots of evidence of sex disparities in the past 10 years.

The risk of heart disease in women is often **underestimated** and there are **notable differences** in the **identification, treatment and outcomes** for heart disease in women.

That is due to...

- 1-Lack of public and professional awareness of women's coronary risk;
- 2-Knowledge gaps regarding women's symptom presentation, optimal screening, and diagnostic procedures;
- 3-Sex disparities contribute to adverse coronary outcomes for women;

SoWomen are under-studied, under-diagnosed, and under-treated leading to multiple sex disparities.



After a heart disease diagnosis,
women are 50% less likely
to participate in cardiac
rehabilitation.



WHY?

Lack of physician referral
Physical and psychosocial barriers
Putting herself last.



- Substantial **gaps in women's knowledge** of heart disease.
- Disconnect between **perceived and actual risk** of heart disease
 - **Perceived:** your own perceptions of your personal risk
 - **Actual:** Determined by measurable risk factors and health behaviours
- Women's understanding and awareness of their **own risk status** is less than optimal.



What are the risk factors for heart disease?
What can you do for your heart health?



ADOLESCENT



YOUNG ADULT



PREGNANCY



POST-MENOPAUSE

Create good habits in childhood.

- Healthy eating
- Physical activity

Know your Family History.

- Certain ovarian conditions can increase risk.

Complications increase risk.

- Premature delivery
- High BP
- Diabetes

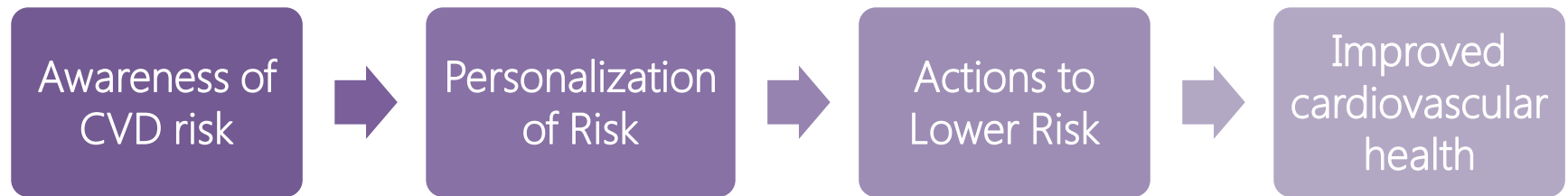
Premature menopause

increases risk of heart disease by 50%.

Cholesterol levels **worsen** after menopause



You can change destiny by modifying your risks





Reducing risk factors
before a first heart
disease event would
prevent or postpone 33%
of all deaths.

Managing risk factors
after a heart event can
reduce mortality by 25%





Age



Sex



Ethnicity



**Family
History**

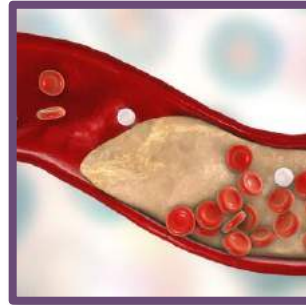




High Blood Pressure



High Cholesterol



Diabetes



Psychosocial
Factors

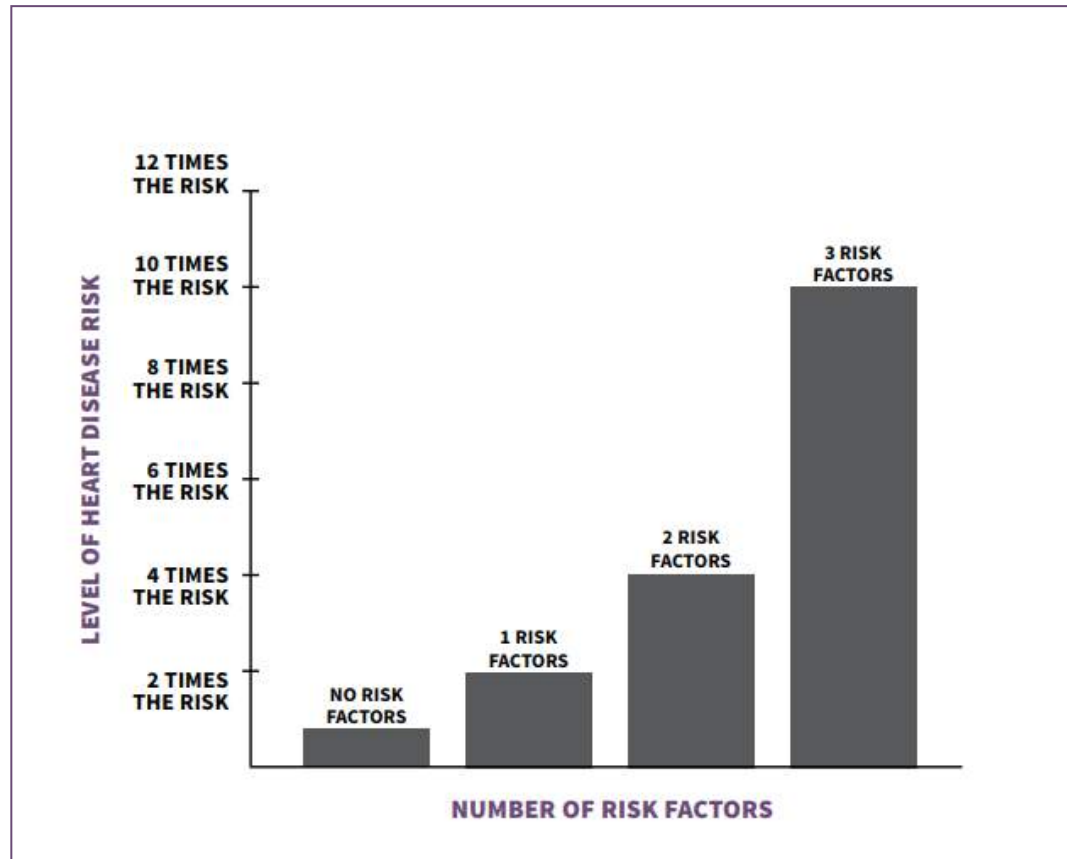


Smoking



Overweight /
Obesity

Know your numbers and talk to your physician




Source: Adapted from Heart Disease Risk Factor "Multiplier Effect" in Midlife Women. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (2006)



How can you take heart health action?



- 
- **It's never too late for change.** If you have risk factors, start taking action to manage them.
 - **Take it one step at a time.** Small changes add up. Set realistic goals.
 - **Reward your successes!**

TOP 10 TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

Making healthy food choices doesn't have to be overwhelming. These tips will get you on your way.



COOK AT HOME MORE OFTEN

Cooking at home makes it easier to avoid processed foods. It can be as simple as scrambled eggs, whole grain toast, tomato and cucumber slices.



HOW YOU EAT IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU EAT

Enjoy mealtimes and the food you eat! Don't multitask. Avoid distractions like your computer or TV while you eat. Sit down and enjoy a meal at the table. If you live with others, make family dinner a priority.



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Eat when you're hungry and stop when you feel satisfied.



EAT AT REGULAR TIMES

Eat breakfast within 1 to 2 hours after waking up. Don't wait too long between your meals. It's harder to make healthy choices when you're hungry.



PLAN HEALTHY SNACKS

Try whole grain crackers and peanut butter or hummus, a piece of fruit and a few unsalted nuts, or frozen berries and plain yogurt.



EAT A VARIETY OF VEGETABLES AND FRUIT AT EVERY MEAL

Enjoy brightly coloured whole vegetables and fruit. Fresh or frozen, try them in different ways—raw, roasted, or sautéed.



EAT WHOLE GRAINS MORE OFTEN

Switch to brown rice, whole wheat pasta, dark rye bread or oatmeal. Try something new in your soup, salad or casserole like quinoa, bulgur or barley.



EAT FISH AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK

Trout, salmon, tuna and sardines are some tasty options. Try fresh frozen or canned.



INCLUDE LEGUMES LIKE BEANS, CHICKPEAS, LENTILS, NUTS AND SEEDS MORE OFTEN

Add them to salads, soups and grain dishes such as rice, quinoa or couscous. Legumes can replace meat in your meals. Try a vegetarian chili.



DON'T BE AFRAID OF FAT

You need fat for good health and it adds flavour to your cooking. Use plant-based fats such as olive or canola oil.

10 TIPS FOR EXERCISE

Having a heart condition shouldn't stop you from being active. Here are 10 tips to help get you started.

- 1 Get your heart pumping every day.** Work the large muscles in your arms and legs by walking, swimming or cycling.
- 2 Work your other muscles, too.** Strengthening your trunk, arms and legs improves your overall fitness.
- 3 Work on balance.** Do something to challenge your balance every day, even standing on one leg in a safe place.
- 4 Some exercise is better than no exercise.** Sessions of at least 10 minutes are beneficial as you work towards 150 to 200 minutes per week.
- 5 Set a goal and track your progress.** Set realistic goals and adjust them regularly.
- 6 Warm up and cool down.** Gently increase your intensity over the first 5-10 minutes and gradually slow down at the end.
- 7 Listen to your body.** Aim for a feeling of "moderate to somewhat difficult" rather than "easy" or "too difficult."
- 8 Use the talk test.** If you can sing while exercising, take it up a notch! If you can't talk without pausing to breathe, back off a bit.
- 9 Moderate intensity exercise is safe for most people.** If you're unsure or want to push a little harder, check with your healthcare provider.
- 10 Sit less, move more.** Moving often throughout the day will improve your overall health.



10 TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Paying attention to your emotional health can help you manage stress and emotions

- 1 Practice Deep Breathing.** Deep breathing relaxes your body and lowers your blood pressure and heart rate.
- 2 Name Your Emotions.** Naming your emotions helps you be more aware and decide how you will react.
- 3 Try Not to Judge Your Emotions.** Judging our emotions can make them seem worse.
- 4 Know Your Emotional Triggers.** Knowing what makes you angry, sad or anxious will help you be better prepared.
- 5 Be More Mindful.** Be aware of what is around you and try to notice your thoughts and feelings.
- 6 Move Your Body.** Physical activity decreases anxiety and improves mood and self-esteem.
- 7 Talk to Someone You Care About.** Humans are social! Make time to talk and connect with others.
- 8 Sleep Well.** Sleep is important for your mind and body.
- 9 Stop “Shoulds” in Their Tracks.** Don't put too much pressure on yourself about what you “should” or “shouldn't” be doing.
- 10 Do the Things That Make You Happy.** Identify the things that make you happy and make time for them.

TOP 10 TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

A few small changes can have big results

- 1 Exercise regularly.** Exercising at least three to five times a week helps to relax and condition your body and mind.
- 2 Breathe deeply.** Take a few deep breaths. Notice how it changes how you feel.
- 3 Be aware of quick fixes.** Try to avoid the tendency to consume more alcohol and non-prescribed drugs in stressful times.
- 4 Notice your thoughts.** Reflect on how you think about what's causing you stress. A trusted person or a counsellor can help you see things in a new way.
- 5 Relax the muscles in your body.** Stress can make your body tense. Try to relax the areas where you carry the most stress.
- 6 Recognize what you can't control.** Reflect on what you can control, and let go of things beyond your control.
- 7 Take a break.** Give yourself permission to nap, listen to music, read, meditate or just have some quiet time.
- 8 Make time for things you enjoy.** Set time aside for hobbies or learning something new.
- 9 Avoid exposure to stress.** If possible, avoid unnecessary triggers for stress, such as distressing TV shows.
- 10 Evaluate your commitments.** Consider how you spend your time and letting go of some commitments.



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LEARNING OBJECTIVE #5



Talking With Health Care Providers



Prepare for your visit. Make a list of the health concerns you want to talk about. Keep in mind that you might only have time to talk about one thing, so tell your doctor about your most important concern first.



Know your medicines. Bring a list of your medicines. Many people see more than one doctor. Having a list of the medicines you're taking can help you and your doctor make decisions about your treatment.



Use the Ask Me 3 questions Approach:

1. What is my main health problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?



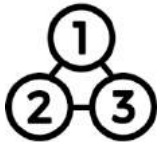
Take notes. Write down the things you talk about, and the decisions you make with your health care team. This will help you remember what you decided, and what you need to do.



Take someone with you. Bring a trusted friend or a member of your family to help you at your visits. He or she can help take notes and ask questions.



Ask for definitions. It's okay to say you don't understand. Health information that's new can be confusing. If someone on your health care team uses terms you don't understand, ask him or her to explain again, in plain language.



Recap. At the end of your appointment, tell your doctor or nurse what you plan to do and when and how you'll do it.



Follow-up. If you get home and still have questions, call or send an e-mail message to your health care team.



Key Messages from today



Start the conversation!



There is a need to **increase the awareness** and recognition that women are at a significant risk of heart disease.



Low levels of heart health **knowledge** and high levels of **unhealthy behaviors** put women at risk.



Volunteer for research studies. We need to better understand how heart disease is different in women. Research informs evidence for clinical practice.



When in doubt, check it out! Call 911 or seek immediate medical care if you think you are having any possible heart related symptoms.



Demand that cardiac issues be ruled out.



- **This is a 'now' problem.** Heart disease is the #1 killer of women and it affects women of all ages.
- **Heart disease is largely preventable.** 80% of risk are within your control!
- **Be your own advocate.** Seek out information and ask questions.
- **Talk to your health care providers** about your health status and what can be done to make improvements.



When women are valued and well, families,
children and communities benefit.





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QUESTIONS?



yourheart.ca