

# Heart attack symptoms are not recognized in over 50% of women.



**Heart disease is on the rise.**  
**It is the leading cause of death for women worldwide.**



## Heart attack symptoms most often felt by women:

- Chest pain, pressure, tightness, or burning
- Pain in the jaw, neck, right arm, or back
- Extreme sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Stomach pain, nausea or indigestion

## Other symptoms women may feel:

- Profound fatigue
- Sleep problems
- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Fast or irregular heartbeat

Women are more likely to present with 3 or more symptoms in addition to chest pain.



If you think you are having a heart attack, get help right away.  
**If possible, call 911.**  
**Do not drive yourself.**

# Women and men can have different types of heart disease.

## Common types of heart disease:

- Cholesterol build-up in heart blood vessels (coronary artery disease)
- Leaky or stiff heart valves affecting blood flow (valvular heart disease)
- Irregular or rapid heartbeat (arrhythmia)

## Women are more likely to have:

- Tear in large blood vessels of the heart (spontaneous coronary artery dissection, SCAD)
- Tightening of the large blood vessels of the heart, limiting blood flow (coronary vasospasm)
- Small vessel disease (microvascular dysfunction)
- Weakened heart due to a stressful event (Takotsubo cardiomyopathy)
- Weakened heart during or after pregnancy (peripartum cardiomyopathy)



Some healthcare providers may be **less aware of the differences** between women and men.



## Women can be at greater risk for heart disease.

### The following conditions lead to a greater risk of heart disease:

- Certain pregnancy complications
- Earlier menopause (before the age of 45)
- Cysts in ovaries and hormonal imbalance (polycystic ovarian syndrome)
- Inflammatory and autoimmune disorders (ex. rheumatoid arthritis, lupus)
- Cigarette smoking
- Diabetes

**Heart disease is largely preventable.**

### What can you do to reduce your risk?

- Be active, keep moving
- Eat a variety of healthy foods
- Manage stress
- Live free from commercial tobacco and vaping
- Limit alcohol
- Get regular check ups (test for blood sugars, blood pressure and cholesterol)



TO TAKE CARE OF OTHERS, YOU NEED TO FIRST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

### START THE CONVERSATION.

To support and to learn more about women's heart health, symptoms, causes, risks and what you can do, visit [WearRedCanada.ca](https://WearRedCanada.ca) or talk to your healthcare provider.



# HEART DISEASE IN WOMEN

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