



# Heart Disease / Cardiovascular Disease: Symptoms, Risks, Prevention and Treatment Options

By team2 - Published 21 March 2026

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Heart disease, also called cardiovascular disease (CVD), is a term used for conditions that impact the heart and blood vessels, including coronary heart disease, stroke, peripheral arterial disease, heart failure, and certain heart rhythm problems. Being aware of the symptoms, risk factors, ways to prevent them, and available treatments can help people lower their risk and get help sooner.

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# Frequently asked questions

## **Heart disease, also called cardiovascular disease (CVD).**

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## **What is the difference between heart disease and cardiovascular disease?**

Heart disease usually refers to conditions affecting the heart itself, while cardiovascular disease is a broader term that includes diseases of the heart and blood vessels. In everyday use, the terms are often used interchangeably.

## **What are the early symptoms?**

Early symptoms may include chest discomfort, shortness of breath, unusual tiredness, palpitations, dizziness, or swelling in the legs and ankles. Some people may have few obvious symptoms at first.

## **Can cardiovascular disease be prevented?**

Many cases can be partly avoided by not smoking, staying active, eating healthier, keeping blood pressure and cholesterol in check, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing diabetes.

## **Who is most at risk of cardiovascular disease?**

People face a higher risk if they have high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, a family history of heart disease, lead a sedentary lifestyle, or have a history of smoking. This risk also tends to rise with age.

## **How is heart disease diagnosed?**

Doctors may use blood pressure checks, blood tests, ECG, echocardiogram, exercise testing, scans, and sometimes angiography depending on the symptoms and suspected condition.

## **When should chest pain be treated as an emergency?**

Chest pain should be treated as urgent if it does not go away, feels severe, spreads to the arm, jaw, neck or back, or happens with sweating, nausea, fainting, or severe shortness of breath.

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