

Gender Differences and Heart Health

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*Your health is very important, to you, and everyone in your life. Don't ignore it. **Take charge! Be strong! GO RED! From Jen See below***



February is American Heart Month. It is also designated “Go Red for Woman” month by the American Heart Association. Why does the American Heart association feel this is an important awareness for woman? Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in America for both men and woman; and although more middle aged men have more heart attacks than woman, this discrepancies begin to disappear later in life, possibly due to a hormonal difference. Woman however, are more likely to die from heart disease than men. This may be partly due to the fact women may not recognize the symptoms of a heart attack. Meaning, the symptoms may not follow the norm in woman, therefore go unnoticed. It is imperative that woman know the possible signs and react. Typically heart attack symptoms have been known to be chest pressure, or pain, nausea, and pain radiating down the left arm, woman on the other hand may not experience chest pain. Women have been known to experience nausea, fatigue, possibly back and jaw pain.

Another possible reason why more women die from heart disease is because of what I like to call “the mommy syndrome” Women, especially mothers have almost an inbred instinct to keep going despite illness or pain. Mothers of young children know what I mean. We often ignore our own needs for the needs of our families. Disparaging our own health does not help your family. It hurts you and them. Woman can ignore the signs of a heart attack chalking them off as a stomach bug, or overexertion and therefore less likely to seek help.

The other discrepancy was recently reported by the American Heart Association’s “scientific statement about heart attacks and women.” They found that within a year of a first heart attack, survival rates were lower in woman than in men. They stated that 47% of woman who've experienced a first heart attack will die, develop heart failure, or suffer from a stroke, compared to 36% of the men. ([See link](#)) The reason they feel this is happening is because, when asked about treatment, women were less likely to receive potentially beneficial medications such as statins and aspirin, or given advice on life changing behaviors.

My conclusion and advice to all this is WOMEN MUST TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR HEALTH. Ladies, educate yourselves. Know your family history or risk factors for heart disease, take care of yourself, know your body! Do not ignore possible symptoms, and make sure you are getting the treatments you need to stay healthy for your families. I very often use the analogy of the oxygen mask on airplanes when talking to my moms who ignore their health for the sake of others. When traveling with small children on an airplane we are told to put on our mask first before attending to the child. This is to prevent us from passing out due to a lack of oxygen and being unable to attend to the child. Your health is very important, to you, and everyone in your life. **Take charge! Be strong! GO RED!**