

HEART DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH SPOTLIGHT

FEBRUARY 2018

HEART DISEASE

What is it?

Heart disease is actually a broad term used for a wide variety of diseases of the heart and blood vessels such as **coronary artery disease**, heart rhythm disorders called arrhythmias and defects of the heart present at birth (congenital heart defects). Most commonly it refers to **coronary artery disease**, also called coronary heart disease or cardiovascular disease. This is a condition in which plaque, which is made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium and other substances

in the blood, builds up inside the coronary arteries which supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart muscle.

This plaque build-up is called **atherosclerosis**. A plaque can grow large enough to reduce or completely block blood flow through an

artery. More frequently, a plaque may rupture, causing a blood clot to form that either blocks the artery or breaks off and travels somewhere else in the body causing a blockage at another site. When the blockage takes place in a blood vessel that feeds the heart, the result is a **heart attack** or, depending on the

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women in the United States. It is an equal opportunity killer which claims approximately 1 million lives annually.

severity, **Sudden Cardiac Death**. If the plaque build-up or blood clot resulting from the plaque rupture

occurs in the carotid arteries on either side of the neck, this is called Carotid Artery Disease and can result in a stroke. Peripheral Arterial Disease is when the major arteries that supply blood to the legs, arms or pelvis are obstructed. If blood flow to any of these areas

CARE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Remember older people, especially women, will often take longer to admit they are not well
- If you suspect a member is having a heart attack, **call 911 immediately**. Minutes count!
- Learning CPR allows you to know what to do in an emergency. CPR can double or triple the chance of survival.
- Educate members about heart disease and encourage them to speak to their PCP about signs to watch for.

of the body is reduced or blocked, numbness, pain and

sometimes dangerous infections such as gangrene can occur.

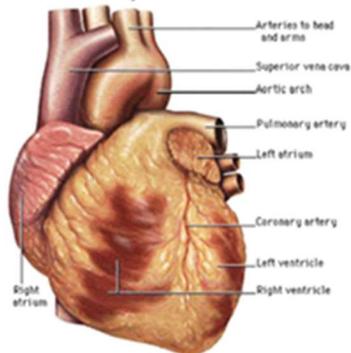
HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS

What to look for

Symptoms of a heart attack or myocardial infarction can vary greatly from person to person, but in order to help you identify a possible heart attack, we have listed some of the most common symptoms below:

- About 2/3 of people experience chest pain, shortness of breath or fatigue a few days or weeks before the attack.
- People with angina (temporary chest pain) may begin to find that it takes less physical activity to trigger the pain.
- Pain in the middle of the chest which can spread to the back, neck, jaw or arms. The pain may also be felt only in the back, neck, jaw or arms.
- Gas-like pain or pressure in the stomach area which is often mistaken for indigestion.
- Approximately 1/3 of people do not feel any chest pain. Many of these are women, non-Caucasian, older than 75, have heart failure or diabetes or have had a stroke.
- Nausea & vomiting which are sometimes mistaken for food poisoning or the stomach flu
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Shortness of breath, especially in older people
- Feelings of restlessness, sweatiness, anxiety or a sense of impending doom
- Bluishness of the lips, hands or feet
- Heavy pounding of the heart or abnormal heart rhythms
- Loss of consciousness (This can be the first symptom of a heart attack!)
- Disorientation resembling a stroke may occur in older people.

Exterior structures of the heart



Interior structures of the heart

