

What are Heart Disease and Stroke?

Cardiovascular diseases are diseases of the heart and blood vessels throughout the body. Coronary heart disease and stroke are two types of cardiovascular disease. Coronary heart disease is caused by blockage of blood vessels leading to the heart. Stroke is caused by blockage or rupture of a blood vessel in the brain.

Who is affected by heart disease and stroke in Connecticut?

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for Connecticut women and men.
- Connecticut residents are 1.4 times more likely to die of heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases than from all forms of cancer combined.
- One out of five Connecticut adults has three or more risk factors for heart disease and stroke. The major risk factors are smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and lack of exercise.
- The estimated cost of cardiovascular disease is \$5.8 billion each year.
- Heart disease and stroke affect some groups more than others:
 - Death rates for cardiovascular disease in Connecticut males are 45% higher than in females.
 - Death rates for stroke in black males are 47% higher than white males.
 - Black males and females are more likely to die from heart disease and stroke before the age of 75 than white males and females.
 - Blacks are more likely than others to have major risk factors for heart disease and stroke and to be hospitalized for the diseases.

Data Source: Connecticut Department of Public Health,
The Burden of Cardiovascular Disease in Connecticut: 2010 Surveillance Report

Why is it important to know if you have a family history of heart disease and stroke?

- Both men and women with a family history of heart disease and stroke have a higher risk of getting these diseases.
- A family history of high blood pressure (over 140/90 mm Hg) or high total cholesterol (over 240 mg/dL) also increase risk.

Why is it important to learn about heart disease and stroke?

- When you know the risk factors for heart disease and stroke, you can change your lifestyle to lower your chances of getting these diseases.
- If you know the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke, you could save your life or someone else's by getting prompt, proper emergency medical care.
 - The symptoms of heart attack are: chest pain or discomfort; jaw, neck, back pain; feeling lightheaded or faint; nausea, vomiting; shortness of breath; arm or shoulder discomfort. *Women are more likely than men to have symptoms unrelated to chest pain.*
 - The symptoms of stroke are: severe headache with no known cause; blurred vision; trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance; confusion, trouble speaking; sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg.

Your Family Health History

Know your past. Act in the present. Protect your future.

The good news:

You can lower your chances of getting these diseases if you know your family history and adopt a healthier lifestyle - don't smoke, exercise regularly, maintain a healthy weight, see your doctor about controlling your blood pressure, diabetes, or cholesterol.

Heart Disease & Stroke Resources:

Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)

www.ct.gov/dph

The American Heart Association (AHA)

www.americanheart.org

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/DHDSP

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

National Stroke Association (NSA)

www.stroke.org