What Asian Americans Need to Know About Heart Disease

In the U.S., heart disease is the leading cause of death in the Asian American population.¹

More than 32% of all Asian Americans die from heart disease each year.¹

- Almost 1 in 4 (21%) of all Asians 18 years of age and older have high blood pressure.²
- **Stroke** is the third leading cause of death in Asian Americans.³
- Even though they have a lower BMI and were less likely to drink and smoke, Asian Americans are nearly 30% more likely to have type 2 diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.⁴
- **Metabolic syndrome** is a combination of conditions that are associated with the development of cardiovascular disease as well as type 2 diabetes. Asian American women (30%) and men (43%) have more than double the prevalence as white women (12%) and men (22%).⁵
- Although Asian Americans tend to have lower overweight/obesity rates than other race groups, obesity prevalence is increasing in US-born Asian Americans.⁹

**Heart Attack Warning Signs:** Every 40 seconds in the United States, someone dies of heart disease.⁶ Don’t wait more than a few minutes to react to these signs and symptoms:⁷

<table>
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<th>Chest discomfort: Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.</th>
<th>Discomfort in other areas of the upper body: Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.</th>
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<td>Shortness of breath: Often with minimal exertion of any kind.</td>
<td>Other signs of distress: Cold sweats, nausea/vomiting, lightheadedness or dizziness, palpitations, or unusual fatigue.</td>
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If you suspect these symptoms, seek help immediately. If you or someone you know is having one or more of the symptoms, call 9-1-1 for the fastest way to receive lifesaving treatment.
How can you tell if you are at risk?

Many different risk factors (conditions or lifestyle habits) can affect your chance of developing heart disease. It’s important to understand which risk factors affect you and what actions you can take to lower your risk of developing heart disease.

Risk factors you CANNOT control.  

Increasing age
- Women: are you post-menopausal or over age 55?
- Men: are you over age 45?

Family History
- Does anyone in your immediate family have a history of heart disease or diabetes?

Sex
- Men typically develop heart disease at younger ages than women. Women are at high risk after they go through menopause

Risk factors you CAN control.
- Do you smoke?
- Do you have diabetes?
- High blood pressure
  - Is your blood pressure 140/90 mmHg or higher? (normal is below 120/80 mmHg)
- High cholesterol
  - Is your total cholesterol over 200 mg/dl?
- Obesity – Are you 30 pounds or more over your recommended weight?
  - Women: is your waist greater than 35 inches?
  - Men: is your waist greater than 40 inches?
- Inactivity
  - Do you exercise less than three times a week?

Each yes puts you at higher risk for developing heart disease.

The good news is that by understanding your risks, you can take charge of your heart health.

The risk factors don’t add their potential danger like one plus one equals two. Instead, the risk level is multiplied. For instance, if you have three risk factors you are TEN times more likely to develop heart disease.

Multiplier Effect: Risk for developing heart disease

12 times the risk
10 times the risk
8 times the risk
6 times the risk
4 times the risk
2 times the risk

No risk factors
1 risk factor
2 risk factors
3 or more risk factors

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Know what tests you should have to monitor your risk factors for developing heart disease and stroke.

Talk to your doctor. Know your risk factors. Take charge of your heart health.

This information is not a substitute for medical care. Please consult a health care provider.