

choose our own pain

Welcome to a long awaited Spring!! For the next couple of newsletters, the focus will be on heart health. This newsletter will focus on heart health for women, and the next one will focus on heart health for men.

Did You Know that Heart Disease is the Leading Cause of Death for American Women?

It was also the leading cause of death for Native Americans in 2000 according to the Center for Disease Control. **Heart disease is not just a disease that affects men!** The American Heart Association (AMA) says that the rate women are dying from heart disease is increasing in the United States, whereas for men, it is decreasing.

Why? Because women often have different and milder symptoms than men. A national survey found that women with heart disease are less likely than men to be diagnosed correctly or treated promptly.

What are Symptoms of Heart Disease for Women?

Some of the most common symptoms for heart disease in women according to the Mayo Clinic can include any of the following:

- ◇ Unexplained fatigue; weakness and/or dizziness; shortness of breath; swelling of lower legs.
- ◇ Flu-like symptoms—specifically nausea, clamminess or cold sweats.

- ◇ Indigestion
- ◇ Abnormal feeling of anxiety
- ◇ Pain in upper back, shoulders, neck, jaw, even down arms.
- ◇ Feeling of tightness or fullness in chest.



The AMA has identified several factors that increase the risk of heart disease in women. You are at risk for heart disease if you:

- ◇ Are post-menopausal. Women are at a higher risk as they get older.
- ◇ Have a family history of heart disease.
- ◇ Have high blood cholesterol.
- ◇ Have diabetes.
- ◇ Have high blood pressure
- ◇ Smoke cigarettes
- ◇ Are not physically active daily.
- ◇ Are heavy, especially in the waist area.
- ◇ Have a lot of stress in your life.
- ◇ Drink more than one alcoholic drink per day on the average.

What Can I Do to Prevent Heart Disease?

- ♥ Eat a healthy diet low in fat and cholesterol.
- ♥ Exercise daily for 30 minutes.
- ♥ Get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked at least once a year.
- ♥ Limit alcohol and don't smoke.
- ♥ Reduce stress.
- ♥ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ♥ Get a complete physical exam at least once a year.