

Understanding Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

CAD: What is it?

Heart disease affects 81 million people in the U.S., or about one in three Americans.

The two most common types of heart disease are coronary artery disease (CAD) and stroke. Other types include congestive heart failure and peripheral artery disease. CAD is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women.

The heart is a muscular organ. Every day it:

- Beats about 100,000 times
- Pumps blood through 60,000 miles of vessels—equal to traveling around the world twice!
- Supplies every cell in the body with blood rich in nutrients and oxygen

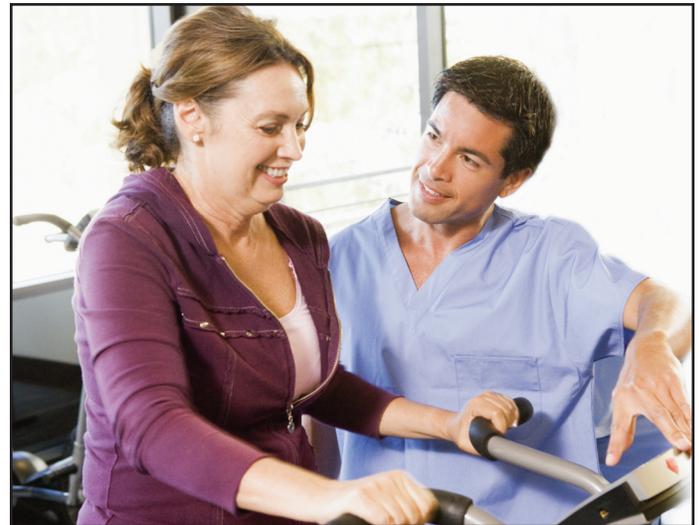
The coronary arteries bring blood to the heart. In people with CAD, arteries get narrowed or blocked by fat or other materials on the inner walls. As they build up, blood flow to the heart is reduced, and the heart gets less oxygen and nutrients. The buildup can also break open and lead to blood clots, which can cause a heart attack.

Over time, CAD can make the heart muscle weak and lead to serious problems, like heart failure (when the heart can't pump blood well enough to the rest of the body) and irregular beating of the heart (arrhythmia).

Know the Risk Factors

Some things raise your risk for CAD, like:

- Men over 45 and women over 55
- Family history of CAD
- Ethnicity (Hispanics and African Americans are at higher risk)



Work with your health care team to lower your risk for coronary artery disease.

There are some risk factors you can control

- High blood pressure
- High LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- Low HDL (“good”) cholesterol
- Certain diseases, such as diabetes
- Being overweight or obese
- Smoking
- Physically inactive
- Stress

What's your risk?

The more risk factors you have, the higher your risk for CAD.

How can I prevent CAD?

Talk with your health care provider about what you can do to lower your risk. You and your health care team can make a plan to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, manage your diabetes, be active, lower stress, and quit smoking.

