



Cardiovascular Disease

The facts:

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD), which encompasses all diseases of the heart (including heart disease and stroke), is the leading cause of death among women in the United States.
- Georgia has the sixth highest CVD death rate in the nation.
- Heart attack, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases claim the lives of more than one-half million women each year—more lives than the next 14 causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer.
- Contrary to the myth that it is a man's disease, CVD actually kills 43,000 more women than men each year.
- More than one in five females have some form of CVD.
- In 1995, U.S. death rates for CVD were 67% higher for black females than for white females.
- Almost 20,000 females under the age of 65 die of coronary heart disease each year. More than 33% of them are under age 55.
- Cardiovascular disease in women often goes undetected and untreated until the disease has become severe. As a result, 44% of women who have heart attacks die within one year, compared to 27% for men.
- A recent study commissioned by the American Heart Association shows that only 8% of American women consider heart disease and stroke their greatest health threats.

Reduce YOUR risk of cardiovascular disease:

- Quit smoking.
- Reduce high blood levels of cholesterol and triglycerides.
- Decrease your blood pressure if it is too high.
- Be more physically active.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about whether to consider estrogen replacement therapy, hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills.
- Control or delay the onset of diabetes.
- Reduce excess weight or maintain a healthy weight.
- Moderate any use of alcohol.

Sources:

- ❖ American Heart Association, Women and Cardiovascular Diseases Fact Sheet, 2000.
- ❖ Rowe A.K., Powell, K.E., and Hall, V. "The 1999 Georgia State of the Heart Report." Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, Cardiovascular Health Section, and the American Heart Association, 1999.
- ❖ CDC Wonder/PC Data File, Compressed Mortality. Death Count 15 to unknown age, All Races, Females, 1996-1997, By Race-Year, Georgia.
- ❖ American Heart Association, Biostatistical Fact Sheet, 1996-97.
- ❖ American Heart Association, "Take Charge! Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke," 1999.

This information is being provided as a source of education and information and is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. The OWH recommends consultation with your doctor or healthcare professional.