

Heart Disease: The leading killer of women in America.

Heart disease is the leading killer of women in the United States. All women face the threat of heart disease. Heart disease is often thought of as a disease that affects more men than women. However, more women than men die from this condition each year. The Budge Clinic Women's Center has made it a goal to better educate women on exercise and healthy lifestyles.

It is important that you understand the symptoms and risk factors of heart disease. The symptoms of heart disease in women can often differ from the symptoms that men experience.

Heart Attack Symptoms for Women:

The most common symptoms for women is pain or pressure in the chest. The pain is not always severe. Other symptoms may include:

- Sweating
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Abdominal discomfort, upper back, neck or shoulder pain
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Unusual fatigue

These symptoms are more subtle than obvious severe chest pain associated with heart attacks. One reason is that women tend to have blockages, not only in their main arteries, but also in smaller arteries that supply blood to their heart. This condition is often called small vessel disease or microvascular disease.

Heart Disease Risk Factors in Women:

- High blood pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Obesity

These are well known risk factors for heart disease. There are several others that are important to be aware of:

- **Metabolic Syndrome:** Metabolic syndrome is the combination of fat around your abdomen, high triglycerides, high blood pressure and high blood sugar. This syndrome has a great influence in women and heart disease.
- Smoking is a greater risk factor for heart disease in women than in men due to the small vessel risk in women
- Mental stress and depression is currently being studied as a risk factor. It is known that depression makes it difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

If you have symptoms of a heart attack remember to call for emergency help. Don't drive yourself to the emergency room.

Please, get regular check-up! It is recommended that you have your cholesterol checked every 5 years or more if you high cholesterol.