

Living Guidelines for Women: What You Need to Know

The American Heart Association, in collaboration with national organizations dedicated to women's health, have released new life-saving guidelines for the prevention of heart disease. Experts recommend that every woman know her risk level for heart disease. Knowing your risk has been linked to taking preventive action. Here is what you need to know:

What is Your Risk Level for Heart Disease?

HIGH RISK	AT RISK	IDEAL CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing coronary heart disease (heart attack, bypass surgery, heart stents) - Stroke or carotid artery disease (narrowed or blocked arteries that take blood to your brain) - Blocked arteries in your legs - Abdominal aortic aneurysm (weakness in the artery in your abdomen) - Chronic kidney disease - Diabetes • Your personal risk factors predict a high risk of heart and vascular disease in the next 10 years. (Based on the Framingham 10-year CVD Risk tool*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more major risk factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cigarette smoking - Poor diet - Lack of regular physical activity or who cannot complete a treadmill exercise test - Overweight (Body Mass Index [BMI] 25-29.9) or Obesity (BMI higher than 30) - Family history of heart or vascular disease - Blood pressure higher than 120/80 - Abnormal cholesterol levels • Heart and other vascular diseases • Lupus or rheumatoid arthritis • Metabolic syndrome (See risk factors below) • Pregnancy complications including: the development of high blood pressure or diabetes, delivering a pre-term infant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A healthy lifestyle with all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blood pressure less than 120/80 mm Hg and not on medicine for blood pressure - Total cholesterol less than 200 mg/dL and not on medicine for cholesterol - Fasting blood glucose less than 100 mg/dL and not on medicine for blood sugar - Body mass index less than 25 kg/m² - Never smoked or quit over one year ago - Performs 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise a week - Eats a diet of fruits and vegetables, whole-grains, and high-fiber foods. Eats fish, especially oily fish twice a week or more. <i>Pregnant women avoid fish with high mercury levels.</i> - Limits saturated fat, cholesterol, alcohol, sodium, sugar, and avoids trans-fatty acids

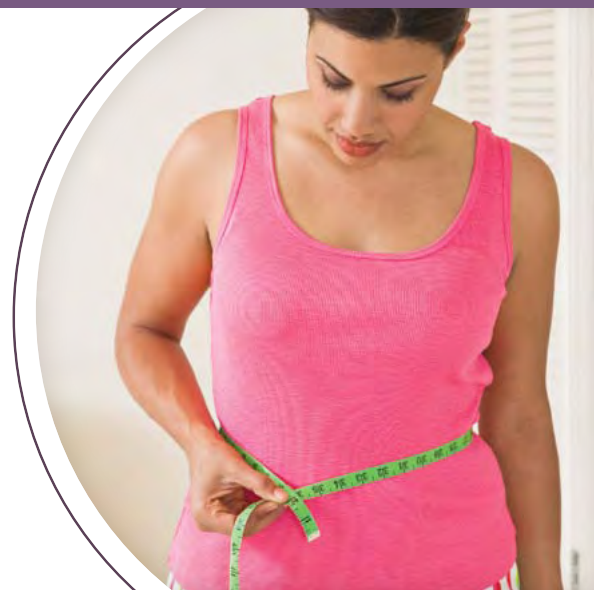
* The Framingham 10-year CVD Risk tool estimates the risk of heart disease based on age, gender, presence of diabetes, total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, smoking, and systolic blood pressure. Consult your doctor or nurse on how to calculate your risk score.

Your Risk for Metabolic Syndrome

Do You Have Metabolic Syndrome?

If you have 3 or more of the following risk factors, then you have the metabolic syndrome and are at greater risk of developing heart and other vascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and having a stroke.

- 1) Your waist is greater than 35 inches
- 2) Your triglycerides are higher than 150 mg/dL
- 3) Your HDL (good cholesterol) is less than 50 mg/dL
- 4) Your blood pressure is higher than 130/85 mm Hg
- 5) Your fasting blood sugar is higher than 100 mg/dL



Lifestyle Guidelines for all Women

Eat Heart-Healthy

- Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables including whole-grain and high-fiber foods.
- Eat fish at least twice a week, preferably oily fish, or talk to your health care provider about taking omega-3 fatty acid (fish oil) supplements.
- Do your best to eat less salt (sodium). Try to limit your sodium to 1500 mg a day.
- Avoid trans-fatty acids. No trans-fats is the goal.
- Eat very little saturated fat (such as fat from meat, cheese, and butter): less than 7% of your total calories a day.
- Eat less than 150 mg of cholesterol a day.
- Drink no more than one alcoholic drink a day. No alcohol is best!

Stop Smoking Cigarettes

Get counseling, nicotine replacement, or drug therapy (if needed) and find a group program to help you stop smoking.



Exercise and Weight Loss

Get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise a week, such as brisk walking. If you are trying to lose weight, then you will need 60 to 90 minutes a day.

Women with Recent Heart Problems

Join a cardiac rehabilitation or physician-guided exercise program following heart attack, stroke, or other cardiac conditions.

Numbers all Women Need to Know



Talk to your health care provider to learn more

Risk Factors	Optimal Level	Your Numbers
Blood pressure	Less than 120/80 mm Hg	___/___ mm Hg
Total cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL	___ mg/dL
LDL - "Bad" cholesterol	Less than 100 mg/dL**	___ mg/dL
HDL - "Good" cholesterol	Greater than 50 mg/dL	___ mg/dL
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL	___ mg/dL
Glucose (HbA _{1c})	Less than 7%	___%
Body mass index (BMI)	18.5-24.9 kg/m ²	___ kg/m ²
Waist circumference	Less than 35 inches	___ inches

** Your health care provider may want your LDL to be less than 70 mg/dL if you have several risk factors.

For more information, visit the following websites:

www.heart.org, www.pcna.net/women, www.womenshealth.gov, www.nhlbi.nih.gov, www.womenheart.org

