

Managing Heart Disease

REMEMBER: Recommended preventive health services are covered at no cost to you on all Marketplace plans.

What is heart disease?

Heart disease is the number one killer in the United States and can include a number of deadly illnesses. Diseases under the heart disease umbrella include blood vessel diseases, heart rhythm problems (arrhythmias), heart defects you're born with and more.

Key risk factors for heart disease include high blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol and smoking. About half of Americans have at least one of these three risk factors. Other medical conditions and lifestyle choices that increase people's risk of heart disease include diabetes, being overweight or obese, poor diet, physical inactivity and excessive alcohol use.

What are common symptoms of heart disease?

Symptoms of heart disease vary depending on which illness you have. Common symptoms include:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Pain, numbness, weakness or coldness in your legs or arms
- Pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen or back
- Fluttering in your chest
- Racing, slowing or irregular heartbeat
- Lightheadedness, dizziness or fainting
- Pale gray or blue skin color
- Swelling in the legs, ankles, feet, abdomen and/or areas around the eyes
- In an infant, shortness of breath during feedings, leading to poor weight gain
- Easily tiring during exercise or activity
- Fever
- Dry or persistent cough
- Skin rashes or unusual spots

How can I prevent and treat heart disease?

Many forms of heart disease can be prevented or treated with healthy lifestyle choices. Heart disease is easier to treat when detected early, so talk to your doctor about any concerns you have regarding your heart health. It's especially important to speak to your doctor if you have a family history of heart disease.

Tips to keep your heart healthy include:

- Regular physical exams with your primary doctor
- Eat a healthy diet low in salt, total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol
- Regular exercise
- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit as soon as possible