

Coronary Artery Disease

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What is Coronary Artery Disease?

CAD occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in the arteries that supplies blood to the heart. Plaque is made up of cholesterol, which can accumulate in your arteries. When this happens, your arteries can narrow over time & this process is called atherosclerosis. Plaque buildup can cause angina which is chest pain or discomfort that one feels when the heart muscle doesn't get enough blood. Over time, CAD can cause a heart attack, or weaken the heart muscle. This may lead to heart failure and/or death.

How is CAD diagnosed?

Doctors can determine your risk for CAD by checking your blood pressure, cholesterol, & blood glucose, & by asking about your family's history of heart disease. If you're at high risk or already have symptoms, your doctor can perform several tests to diagnose CAD.

If you have CAD, there are steps you can take to lower your risk for having a heart attack or worsening heart disease. Your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes such as eating a healthier diet, exercising, & not smoking. Medications may also be necessary.

What is a Heart Attack?

A heart attack occurs when a section of the heart muscle dies or gets damaged because of reduced blood supply. CAD is the main cause of heart attack. Major symptoms of a heart attack are pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back, feeling weak, feeling light-headed, fainting, pain or discomfort in the chest, pain or discomfort in arms or shoulders or shortness of breath.

Sudden cardiac arrest (the stopping of the heart) occurs when the heart stops completely. Unless treated, a person whose heart has stopped can die within minutes.

http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/coronary_ad.htm

Overweight & Obesity:

Defining Overweight and Obesity

Overweight and obesity are both labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the "body mass index" (BMI). BMI is used because, for most people, it correlates with their amount of BODY FAT. To calculate your BMI, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html

A BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.

A BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.

The higher your BMI, the higher your risk for certain diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, and certain cancers. Along with being overweight or obese, the following conditions will put you at greater risk for heart disease and other conditions:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol)
- Low HDL cholesterol ("good" cholesterol)
- High triglycerides
- High blood glucose (sugar)

Family history of premature heart disease
Physical inactivity
Cigarette smoking

For people who are considered obese (BMI greater than or equal to 30) or those who are overweight (BMI of 25 to 29.9) and have two or more of the risk factors above, it is recommended that you lose weight. Even a small weight loss (between 5 and 10 percent of your current weight) will help lower your risk of developing diseases associated with obesity.

Talk to your doctor to see whether you are at an increased risk and whether you should lose weight. Your doctor will evaluate your BMI, waist measurement, and other risk factors for heart disease.
<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/>