

# Heart Disease in Women

## An Overview

**KNOW THE FACTS TO PROTECT YOURSELF & LOVED ONES**



### **Legal Disclaimer:**

This document is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health or personal advice.

## Medical & Legal Disclaimer

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Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional with any questions you may have regarding your health or a medical condition. Never disregard the advice of a medical professional, or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this document.

If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor, go to the nearest hospital emergency department, or call the emergency services immediately. If you choose to rely on any information provided in this document, you do so solely at your own risk.



## Amazing FACTS about



The average heart is the size of an adult fist



Your heart will beat more than 100,000 times each day.



Each day, your heart pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood.



The blue whale has the largest heart - weighing over 1,500 pounds.



The human heart weighs less than one pound, but a man's heart is typically two ounces heavier than a woman's.



## Amazing FACTS about



A woman's heart beats faster than a man's by almost 8 beats a minute.



Laughing is good for your heart. It reduces stress and gives a boost to your immune system.



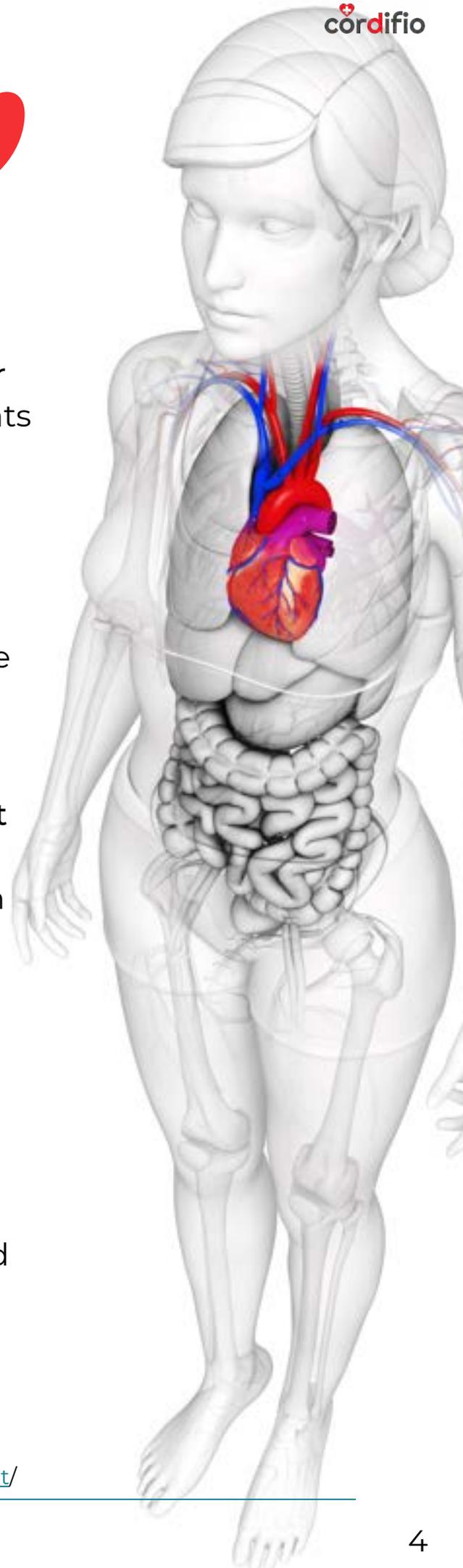
Heart disease is your **greatest threat** (and is greater danger than breast cancer in women and prostate cancer in men).



Heart cancer is very rare, because **heart cells stop dividing** early in life.



Heart disease has been found in **3,000-year-old mummies**.



Source: Cleveland Clinic

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/facts-about-the-heart/>

**WHY** do **WE** need  
to talk about  
**HEART DISEASE**  
in women?

**“We are half-century behind  
in our knowledge about  
optimal screening, diagnosis &  
treatment of heart disease in  
women.  
Every day, women pay the price.”**

Dr. NOEL BAIREY MERZ

WHA Scientific Advisor

Director of the Barbara Streisand Women’s Heart Center  
at Cedars-Sinai Institute in Los Angeles

Source: Women’s Heart Alliance





**#1 killer of women**

more than all cancers  
combined is

**HEART DISEASE**



**80%** heart disease  
& stroke  
are preventable



**50%** of women  
following a heart attack are  
**MISDIAGNOSED**

**WHY**  
**is that?**

Women are different compared to men when it comes to heart disease.

## Anxiety in women

may mask heart disease symptoms

**30-50% women**

diagnosed with depression

**are misdiagnosed**



Karen Narraway

Source: <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/articles/heart-disease-in-women-they-told-me-it-was-anxiety>

# Know the Symptoms

## KEY FACTS on Heart Attack:

Many people expect a heart attack to be sudden. But research suggests that **women experience symptoms for several weeks before a heart attack.**

A study published in 2003 of women who had experienced a heart attack, reports **80% of women had minimum 1 symptom at least 4 weeks before their heart attack.**

Symptoms may be constant or come and go, and they may also disrupt sleep.

It is vital for a woman who experiences any of these symptoms to seek help immediately, as **heart attacks can be fatal, regardless of whether symptoms are mild or severe.**

Source: 2003 study - Women's Early Warning Symptoms of Acute Myocardial Infarction  
<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/01.cir.0000097116.29625.7c>

**80% of women**

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**1 symptom**

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## Rising HEART ATTACKS

### in Younger Women

**Younger women are having more heart attacks,** says a recent study. Researchers were surprised to find that while the heart attack rate has decreased among older adults **it's risen among those ages 35-54, especially women.**



"This observational study found a **trend in young women**, but the research doesn't provide insight into why the uptick in heart attacks is happening to younger people. I suspect it has to do with **more people having risk factors for heart disease at an earlier age.**"

Virginia Colliver, M.D., cardiologist  
Johns Hopkins Community  
Physicians-Heart Care  
in Bethesda, Maryland, US

Source: Heart Attacks Striking Younger Women - Hopkins Medicine  
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/heart-attack/heart-attacks-striking-younger-women>

## HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS

### MEN vs. WOMEN

The most common symptom of a heart attack for both men and women is chest pain.

**BUT WOMEN are more likely than men to:**

1

Have heart attack symptoms unrelated to chest pain.

2

Experience “ATYPICAL” symptoms “unexplained shortness of breath, or pain in areas including the jaw, neck, arms, back and stomach”.

3

Suffer a heart attack without chest pains up until the age of 65.

Source: American Heart Association’s journal, Circulation Published April 4, 2019. The Journal of the American Medical Association, Oklahoma Heart Institute

# WOMEN

Nausea or vomiting 

Jaw, neck or upper back pain 

Chest pain, but not always 

Pain or pressure in the lower chest or upper abdomen 

Shortness of breath 

Fainting 

Indigestion 

Extreme fatigue 

# MEN

Nausea or vomiting 

Jaw, neck or back pain 

Squeezing chest pressure or pain 

Shortness of breath 



Source: American Heart Association's journal, Circulation Published April 4, 2019. The Journal of the American Medical Association, Oklahoma Heart Institute

## RISK FACTORS in women:

### AGE

55+ years old are at greater risk of heart attack. This may be because hormones provide some protection from heart disease before menopause.

However, younger women (below 45) who do not experience chest pain, are more likely to die than male heart attack patients in the same age group.

### FAMILY HISTORY/ GENETICS

Women with a MALE relative who had a heart attack by the age of 55 years old, or a FEMALE relative who has had one by 65 years of age, are considered to have a family history of heart attack and are at increased risk.

### HEALTH STATUS

Certain markers, such as high blood pressure and high-cholesterol, increases the risk of heart attack in both males and females.

### LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Smoking or using stimulant drugs (e.g. cocaine or amphetamines), a sedentary lifestyle, or high levels of stress will all increase the risk of heart attack.

### MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Women with conditions like diabetes, obesity, and autoimmune disorders are more likely to have a heart attack. Diseases such as endometriosis, PCOS, or a history of preeclampsia (during pregnancy) also increase the risk.

## PREVENTION:

### 7 TIPS for better health (not only heart one):



Go for regular health check-ups with your doctor (min once a year).



Manage other health conditions e.g. high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.



Quit smoking & avoid tobacco in any form. Heart disease risk reduces by **50 percent just 12 months** after someone quits smoking.



No use of drugs, especially stimulants, such as cocaine and amphetamines.



Lose weight & maintain healthy Body Mass Index (BMI)



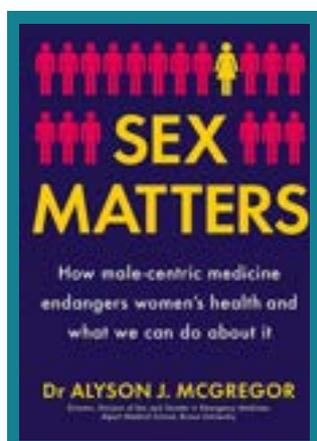
Engage in minimum 30 min of aerobic activity, such as walking, every day.



Eat a balanced diet and visit a dietician if necessary for dietary advice.



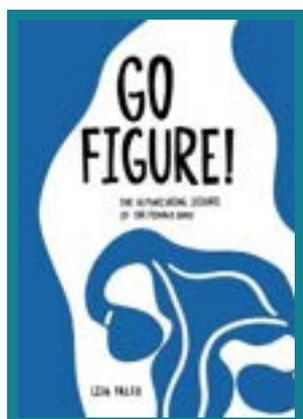
## MUST READ



Sex Matters tackles one of the most urgent, yet unspoken issues facing women's health care today: all models of medical research and practice are based on male-centric models that ignore the unique biological and emotional differences between men and women - an omission that endangers women's lives.

The facts surrounding how male-centric medicine impacts women's health every day are chilling.

Source: <https://www.bookdepository.com/Sex-Matters-Dr-Alyson-J-McGregor/9781529405897?ref=grid-view&qid=1621871965221&sr=1-1>

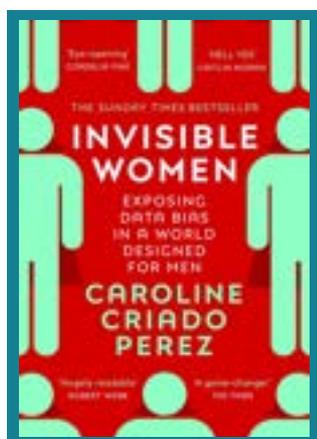


We all know that the female body changes cyclically every month during the reproductive years, and that it completely transforms during puberty, pregnancy and menopause. However, most of us ignore the fascinating details. What triggers those changes and what are the sometimes unexpected consequences?

The facts are as mind-blowing as entertaining. Based on the latest research, all information is presented in an easy to read manner with plenty of anecdotes; from historical prejudices to personal experiences, with some evolutionary ideas in between.

Source: <https://www.bookdepository.com/Go-Figure-Lisa-Falco/9781913962241>

## MUST READ

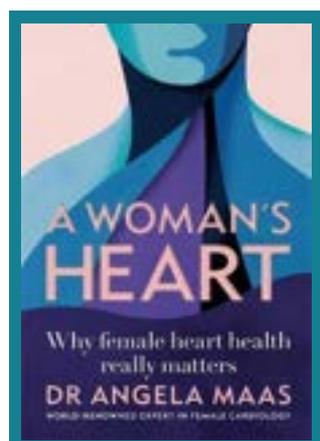


Imagine a world where...

- 1) Your phone is too big for your hand.
- 2) Your doctor prescribes a drug that is wrong for your body.
- 3) In a car accident you are 47% more likely to be injured. If any of that sounds familiar, chances are you're a woman.

Discover the shocking gender bias that affects our everyday lives. From government policy and medical research, to technology, workplaces, and the media. **Invisible Women** reveals how in a world built for and by men we are systematically ignoring half of the population, often with disastrous consequences.

Source: <https://www.bookdepository.com/Invisible-Women/9781784706289>



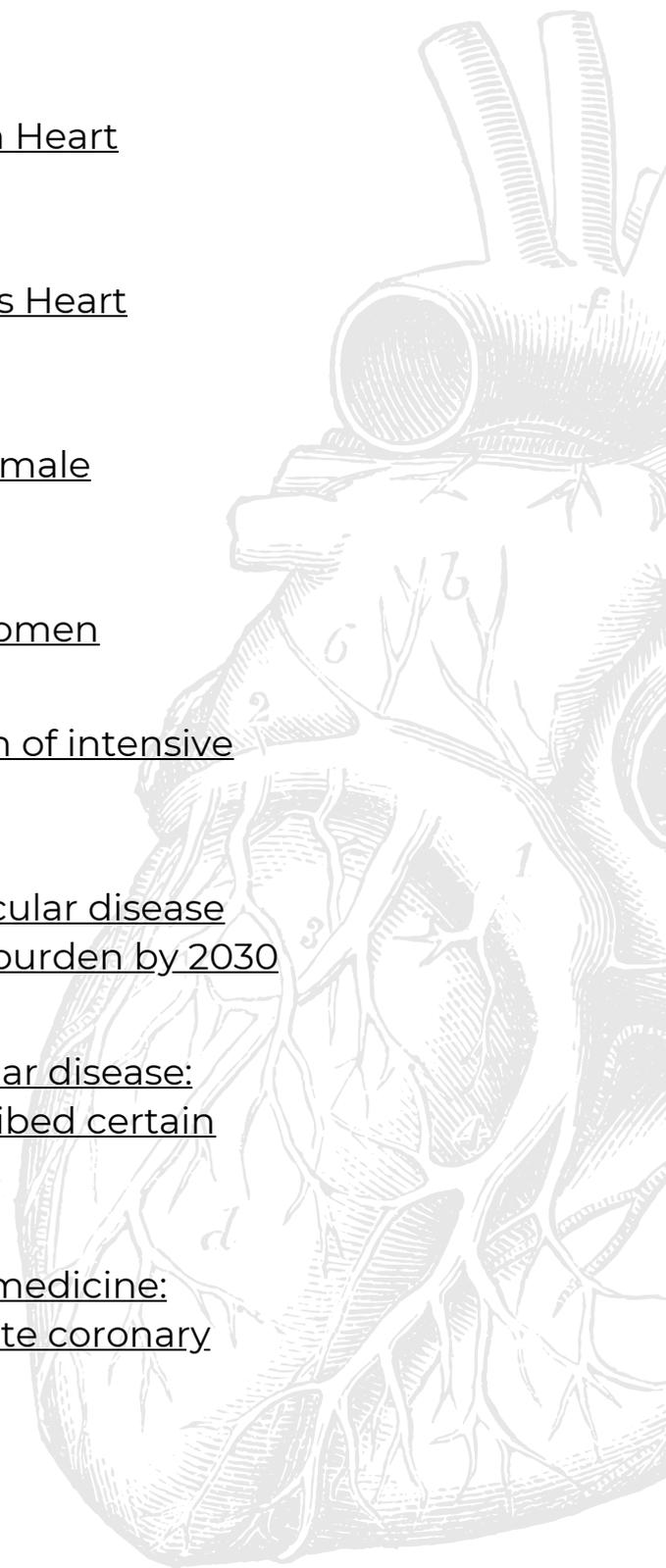
- DID YOU KNOW...
  - ...women are 50% more likely to be misdiagnosed following a heart attack?
    - ...more than twice as many women die from coronary heart disease than from breast cancer in the UK?
  - ...two-thirds of clinical research into heart disease focuses on men?

This vital book is the result of decades of international research. It exposes the gender bias in cardiology and paves the way for better heart health for women everywhere.

Source: <https://www.bookdepository.com/Womans-Heart-Professor-Angela-Maas/9781783254156?ref=grid-view&qid=1662621983107&sr=1-1>

## RESOURCES

1. [Women and heart disease - British Heart Association](#)
2. [Diagnostic Differences in Women's Heart Health](#)
3. [Cardiovascular Disease and the Female Disadvantage](#)
4. [Heart Attacks Striking Younger Women](#)
5. [Gender differences in the provision of intensive care: in Switzerland](#)
6. [The Lancet women and cardiovascular disease Commission: reducing the global burden by 2030](#)
7. [Gender differences in cardiovascular disease: Women are less likely to be prescribed certain heart medications](#)
8. [Sex and gender in cardiovascular medicine: presentation and outcomes of acute coronary syndrome](#)
9. [Bias in Medicine](#)
10. [Women's Early Warning Symptoms of Acute Myocardial Infarction](#)



# Heart disease is

# 80% preventable :)

- Following a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be complicated, and it doesn't mean you need to live a life of self-deprivation.
- Find ways to incorporate healthy habits in your lifestyle and that of your loved ones.
- Listen to your body and take care of yourself and your dear ones.
- Talk with your loved ones about heart health!
- Look for the signs early on. Catch it when it's small.

**TIME IS MUSCLE.  
Don't wait for a heart attack!**

**Don't wait for a second life, we are not cats.**



# Make Women's Hearts Beat Longer!



CorDiFio Women Health Association is a Swiss-based social enterprise dedicated to empowering women (and men) through early screening, education and prevention of heart disease. This is a global endeavor for all to advance health equity through diversity and inclusion.

## Contact us



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