

[IMAGE]

## Heart Disease: Not Just for Men

By Editorial Staff

While almost as many women die annually from heart disease as do men, it is still often regarded as a "man's disease," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One reason may be that men suffer a first heart attack at the age of 65, on average, while women don't until they're seven years older – at an average age of 72.

Blood pressure is an important indicator of heart attack risk, and the differences between men and women may help explain why women need to be as concerned as men, if not more. Research suggests a woman's blood pressure actually increases more steeply than does a man's, with elevations beginning as early as a woman's 30s. The study authors suggest this "may set the stage for later-life cardiovascular diseases that tend to present differently, not simply later, in women compared with men."

heart disease - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark According to the CDC, only about half of women understand that their biggest health risk is heart disease (not breast cancer, for example). One in five women in the U.S. die of heart disease every year. Make sure you're not one of them by understanding the key components of a heart-healthy lifestyle that keep your blood pressure, cholesterol and other risk factors in the safe range: a healthy diet, consistent exercise, low stress levels, not smoking and limiting alcohol intake.

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