



Every minute in America, a woman dies of a heart attack, stroke or another form of cardiovascular disease. As we know, one out of every three women experiences some form of CVD. And yet, according to the American Heart Association, most of those cases are preventable if you lead a heart-healthy lifestyle.

With early screening, early detection and early treatment of the disease, you will see the incidence of coronary artery disease go down.

Read on to learn what you need to know to assess if you should get a heart health screening.

Key health indicators

Some of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, body weight/body mass index and high blood glucose. These numbers can serve as a wake-up call to jumpstart a healthier lifestyle. Testing should occur as follows:

- Blood pressure – every regular health care visit starting at age 20
- Cholesterol – every five years starting at age 20. More often if: total cholesterol is above 200; if you are a man older than 45 or a woman older than 50; if you're a woman whose HDL is less than 50 or a man whose HDL is less than 40; if you have other cardiovascular risk factors
- Weight/body mass index – every health care visit starting at age 20
- Waist circumference – as needed starting at age 20

Blood glucose – every three years starting at age 45

Family history
If you know you have a [family history of heart disease](#), it's important to share that information with your doctor. This will help cue your physician into your genetics, making him or her more aware of additional risk factors.

Health habits

- Do you [smoke](#)? Are you physically inactive? If you're a woman, do you drink more than one drink a day? Do you eat a diet high in fat? How do you respond to stress? The answers to all the above could also impact your risk for heart disease and stroke. Talk to your doctor so he or she has a better idea of your lifestyle and can determine whether or not you need to be screened. In addition, your answers will help your doctor understand how he or she can help you improve your health.

Eat a healthy diet. Foods that can help lower cholesterol

- A variety of whole- and multi-grain products, such as bran and oats
- Fatty fishes, such as salmon, mackerel and albacore tuna
- Foods rich in antioxidants, such as fruits and vegetables
- Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as avocado

Get moving. Staying physically active will help you control your weight and strengthen your heart. Try walking for 10 minutes, 3 times a day, at least 5 days a week. This will give you a total of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity.

You can learn more about your numbers and key health indicators with the [Go Red Heart CheckUp](#).

Wear **red**, Sunday, February 25.

