

Heart Disease and Stroke

Both heart disease and stroke are very common in America. Sometimes they can be hard to notice because there may be no symptoms or the signs are not noticed.

What is Heart Disease?

The heart is a muscle that pumps blood to the body. The blood carries oxygen to the body. A heart attack is when the blood supply to the heart is blocked. This can cause serious damage to the heart or even death.

What is a Stroke?

Strokes are when the blood supply to part of the brain is interrupted. If the brain does not get oxygen because the blood supply is stopped, this can cause serious damage to the brain or even death.

Signs of a Heart Attack or Stroke

Someone having a heart attack may experience one or many of these warning signs:

Someone having a stroke may experience one of many of these warning signs:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

If you are possibly having a heart attack or stroke, it is an emergency. Call 9-1-1 immediately!

What are risk factors?

Certain things can increase the chance of getting heart disease and stroke.

- High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Cigarette Smoke
- Physical Inactivity

Some risk factors cannot be changed like family histo-

ry of these health problems, race or ethnicity, age or sex.

Some risk factors you can change. High blood pressure can often be improved by lifestyle changes (diet and exercise) or sometimes your doctor may prescribe medication, also. Lowering blood pressure and cholesterol can improve diabetes.

It is very important to quit smoking and be physically active to lower your risk of heart disease or stroke.

For more information, contact your doctor or health-care provider. If you do not have a clinic or doctor you can also call the Community Health Coordinator at the Karen Organization of Minnesota for support and to assist you to schedule a health appointment at (651) 788-7593

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