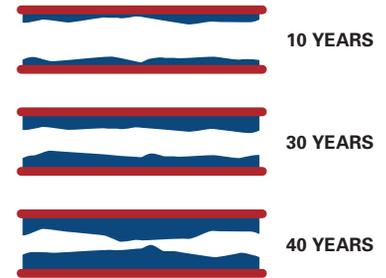


# BLACK AMERICANS AND HEART DISEASE

## WHAT IS CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE (CAD)?

Coronary artery disease, or CAD, happens when cholesterol-containing deposits (plaque) build up on the inner walls of coronary arteries over time. This causes the arteries to harden and narrow, which decreases blood flow to the heart. As a result, your heart doesn't get the blood, oxygen and nutrients it needs, which can lead to chest pain or other symptoms. In some cases, it can lead to a heart attack which is caused when the heart muscle dies because of the absence of blood flow.<sup>1</sup>

The build-up of plaque can be attributed to poor lifestyle habits such as smoking and obesity, but it can also be caused by things that cannot be avoided, such as aging or a family history of heart disease.



Images depict build up of plaque in an artery over time

## COMMON SYMPTOMS OF CAD

People may feel heart disease symptoms during stress, physical activity or even at rest. It is more common to experience these symptoms while walking, going up stairs or moving around. It is important to note that women often do not exhibit the same symptoms as men when having a heart attack.

If you feel these signs, seek help from a health care provider immediately.

### COMMON SYMPTOMS<sup>4</sup>



CHEST PAIN OR PRESSURE (ANGINA)



FATIGUE



SHORTNESS OF BREATH



SUDDEN PROFUSE SWEATING

### COMMON SYMPTOMS FOR WOMEN<sup>2</sup>



DISCOMFORT IN BACK, SHOULDERS, ARMS, JAW, NECK



INSOMNIA OR INABILITY TO SLEEP



SHORTNESS OF BREATH



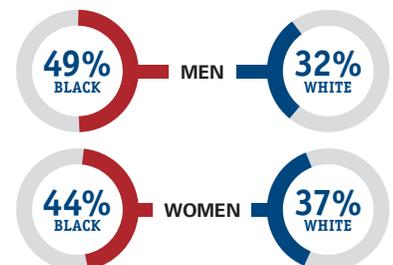
LIGHTHEADEDNESS OR DIZZINESS



NAUSEA OR VOMITING

## CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IS THE #1 KILLER OF BLACK AMERICANS IN THE U.S.<sup>2</sup>

Black Americans are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease and stroke than White Americans.



Black men and women have higher rates of heart disease than White men and women<sup>2</sup>



High blood pressure is a leading cause of heart attacks and stroke; About 2 out of every 5 Black American adults have high blood pressure, and less than half of them have it under control<sup>3</sup>

## REDUCING YOUR RISKS

There are things you can do to reduce the risk of having a heart attack, like quitting smoking, taking steps to lower cholesterol, exercising regularly, keeping diabetes and high blood pressure under control and seeing your doctor regularly.



**QUIT  
SMOKING**



**LOWER  
CHOLESTEROL**



**EXERCISE  
REGULARLY**



**CONTROL DIABETES AND  
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**



**VISIT DOCTOR  
REGULARLY**

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms or know that you have certain risk factors, here are some questions you can ask your doctor to help you get access to the care you may need.

- Could I have a heart problem?
- What caused my heart problem?
- What treatments do I need? What are the side effects?
- What should I do if my symptoms get worse quickly?
- What can I do to prevent this from getting worse or having a heart problem again?
- Should I eat different foods?
- How will this affect my day-to-day activities, such as working, or caring for my children or grandchildren?
- What can I do to feel less stress and worry?
- How often do I need to come in for an office visit?

### SOURCES:

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