

What is heart disease?

Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States. It happens when cholesterol and other substances build up in your blood. This build-up can block the flow of blood and cause a heart attack or stroke.

There are three common types of heart disease:

- 1. Coronary Artery Disease:** Occurs when blood has a hard time getting to the heart, so the heart does not get all the blood it needs.
- 2. Heart Failure:** Occurs when the heart's pumping power is not as strong as usual, so the organs that usually get blood from the heart do not get enough of it.
- 3. Heart Arrhythmias:** Occurs when there are changes in the beat of the heart – you may have a few flutters, or your heart may race once in a while – so the heart may not be able to pump enough blood to the body.

Who is at risk for heart disease?

Both men and women are at risk for heart disease. Risk factors for heart disease include:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Family history of heart disease
- Sleep apnea
- Being overweight or obese
- Diabetes
- Not exercising
- Stress

How does heart disease affect our community?ⁱ

- Heart disease is the second leading cause of death in Oregon, followed by stroke.
- The total cost of heart disease hospitalizations in Oregon in 2006 was more than \$900 million; the total cost of heart disease and stroke hospitalizations was over \$1.2 billion.
- In Oregon in 2006, heart disease death rates were higher in men than women in most ages; African Americans consistently had among the highest heart disease death rates.

What is the recommended care for heart disease?

When people have heart disease, they are at high risk of having a heart attack or stroke. They can lower this risk by keeping their “bad” cholesterol at a healthy level. That’s why it’s especially important for people with heart disease to get a cholesterol test.

You can use *Partner for Quality Care* quality scores to compare how well Oregon doctors’ offices give recommended care at www.PartnerForQualityCare.org.

Signs of heart disease:

- ✓ Pain in chest or arm
- ✓ Feeling dizzy or nauseous
- ✓ Being more tired than usual
- ✓ Feeling you can’t get enough air
- ✓ Unusual heart beats
- ✓ Swelling in ankles, feet and legs

High-quality care is the **care you need when you need it** – no less and no more. High-quality care starts with having a doctor who respects you, communicates clearly with you, and involves you in decisions about your care. Quality care is care that works, care that is safe, and care that’s recommended for heart disease:

STAGE OF CARE	YOUR DOCTOR SHOULD
Diagnosis & Every Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check blood pressure. The blood pressure goal for most people is less than 140/90. ✓ Check chest, neck veins, ankles, feet, legs, stomach, and weight. ✓ Discuss lifestyle habits and self-monitoring. ✓ Review and discuss medicines – what they do, side effects, etc.
Ongoing Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check cholesterol levels regularly. This is done with a simple, routine blood test. ✓ Give you flu/pneumonia shots as needed.
After a Heart Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review the medications you take and tell you how long you should take your beta blocker medicine.

ⁱ*Source: Oregon Heart Disease & Stroke Program. The Burden of Heart Disease and Stroke in Oregon 2007. Available online at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/hdsp/docs/2007BurdenReport.pdf>.