



Detroit Medical Center Heart Disease Information

Each year, cardiovascular diseases top the list of the country's most serious health problems. This information will help you learn more about the most common forms of cardiovascular disease, including symptoms, risk factors, diagnosis, and treatment. The DMC is home to the state's leading experts in heart disease, including the physicians of **CARDIO TEAM ONE**.

Heart Attack (myocardial infarction or MI)

A heart attack, or myocardial infarction, occurs when one of more regions of the heart muscle experience a severe or prolonged lack of oxygen caused by blocked blood flow to the heart muscle. The blockage is often a result of atherosclerosis - a buildup of plaque, known as cholesterol, other fatty substances, and a blood clot. Plaque inhibits and obstructs the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart, reducing the flow to the rest of the body. The cause of a heart attack is a blood clot that forms within the plaque-obstructed area.

If the blood and oxygen supply is cut off severely or for a long period of time, muscle cells of the heart suffer damage and die.

Coronary Artery Disease

Coronary heart disease, or coronary artery disease (CAD), is the accumulation of fatty deposits along the innermost layer of the coronary arteries. The fatty deposits may develop in childhood and continue to thicken and enlarge throughout the life span. This thickening, called atherosclerosis, narrows the arteries and can decrease or block the flow of blood to the heart. Nearly 13 million Americans suffer from CAD - the number one killer of both men and women in the U.S.

Heart Failure

Heart failure, also called congestive heart failure, is a condition in which the heart cannot pump enough oxygenated blood to meet the needs of the body's other organs. The heart keeps pumping, but not as efficiently as a healthy heart. Usually, the loss in the heart's pumping action is a symptom of an underlying heart problem. Heart failure affects nearly 5 million U.S. adults.

High Blood Pressure/Hypertension

Blood pressure, measured with a blood pressure cuff and stethoscope by a nurse or other healthcare provider, is the force of the blood pushing against the artery walls. Each time the heart beats, it pumps blood into the arteries, resulting in the highest blood pressure as the heart contracts.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, directly increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. With high blood pressure, the arteries may have an increased resistance against the flow of blood, causing the heart to pump harder to circulate the blood.

If you are concerned about any of these conditions, discuss them with your doctor. If you do not have a doctor, the DMC can find one for you. Call 888-DMC-2500 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.

