

WORLD HEART DAY

How can you prevent and control cardiovascular disease?

WHAT IS WORLD HEART DAY?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the world's leading cause of death, claiming [17.9 million lives](#) each year. World Heart day, which falls on Wednesday 29 September this year, aims to educate people about how important good cardiovascular health is and what they can do to prevent CVD.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE SYMPTOMS

Often, there are no underlying [symptoms](#) of cardiovascular disease. In many cases, a heart attack or stroke may be the first sign. However, heart attack symptoms are different for men and women. Men usually experience chest pain, difficulty breathing and pain in the left arm or jaw.

Women can experience similar symptoms to men, but their pain may be more diffused and spread to the shoulders, neck, arms, abdomen, and back. If there is no pain, women may instead experience unexplained anxiety, nausea, dizziness, palpitations and a cold sweat.

Because women's symptoms are less commonly recognised as the signs of a heart attack, women suffer more fatalities than men. If you believe you're experiencing the symptoms of a heart attack, seek emergency medical care immediately.

Cardiovascular disease can be diagnosed by a doctor via a range of laboratory tests. The earlier you catch CVD, the easier it is to treat.

HOW YOU CAN PREVENT CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

At least [80% of premature deaths](#) from heart disease could be avoided with lifestyle changes:

1. A HEALTHY DIET

A low fat, high fibre diet that includes fresh fruit and vegetables is essential for maintaining good heart health. Limit your salt intake to 6g to keep your blood pressure steady and avoid too much sugar, which increases your risk of diabetes.

2. REGULAR EXERCISE

Combining a balanced diet with regular exercise helps you to maintain a healthy weight, which reduces your chances of developing high blood pressure. The heart is a muscle and, therefore, benefits from exercise. A strong heart will pump blood around your body with less effort.

3. QUIT SMOKING

Smoking is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, furring of the arteries and coronary thrombosis. When you quit smoking, your risk of heart attack decreases by [50%](#) in just one year.

4. DRINK IN MODERATION

If you drink, don't exceed the maximum recommended limits. Try to spread your drinking over three days or more if you regularly consume alcohol as binge drinking increases the risk of a heart attack.

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