



March 2006

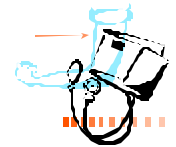
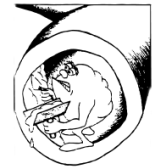


Risk Factors

You can modify or control these six major independent risk factors for coronary heart disease:



- 1. Cigarette and Tobacco Smoke** – Smoking is the most important risk factor for Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) that is changeable. Smoking increases blood pressure, decreases exercise tolerance, and increases the tendency for blood to clot. About 180,000 of the 400,000 smoking-related deaths are from CHD. Furthermore, approximately 35,000 non-smokers die from CHD due to second-hand smoke each year.
- 2. High Cholesterol** – People who have high cholesterol are more likely to develop atherosclerosis (the hardening of the arteries due to plaque build-up in the artery walls). This hardening of the arteries can lead to CHD.
- 3. High Blood Pressure** – High blood pressure causes the heart to work harder, leading to a greater risk of CHD. If blood pressure is lowered to a normal measurement (less than 120/80 mmhg), chances of heart attack are lowered by 20 – 25 percent.
- 4. Physical Inactivity** – Jogging, cycling, swimming, fitness walking, aerobic dancing, and other such activities will contribute to a healthy heart.
- 5. Obesity** – Obesity greatly increases the risk of high blood pressure, raises LDL, lowers HDL, and increases triglycerides. These factors, in turn, increase your risk of developing heart disease.
- 6. Diabetes** – People with Diabetes are 2 – 4 times more likely to develop CHD than other people. This is because they are more likely to develop risk factors that increase the risk of heart disease such as high blood pressure, high LDL (bad cholesterol), high triglycerides, low HDL (good cholesterol), obesity, and lack of physical inactivity.



Don't forget these other great resources: Your Healthwise[®] Handbook, 24-Hour Nurse Line, Nurse Line Chat, Audio Health Information Library[®], and www.spectrumhs.com for links to reliable health information.

