

What is the Cardiovascular System?

Head disease describes a range of conditions that affect your heart. Diseases under the heart disease umbrella include blood vessel diseases, such as coronary artery disease; heart rhythm problems (arrhythmias); and heart defects you're born with (congenital heart defects), among others.

Cardiovascular disease generally refers to conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain (angina) or stroke. Other heart conditions, such as those that affect your heart's muscle, valves or rhythm, also are considered forms of heart disease.

Symptoms can include:

- Chest pain, chest tightness, chest pressure and chest discomfort (angina)
- Shortness of breath
- Pain, numbness, weakness or coldness in your legs or arms if the blood vessels in those parts of your body are narrowed
- Pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper abdomen or back

Head disease symptoms caused by abnormal heartbeats (heart arrhythmias). A heart arrhythmia is an abnormal heartbeat. Your heart may beat too quickly, too slowly or irregularly. Heart arrhythmia symptoms can include: Fluttering in your chest, Racing heartbeat (tachycardia), Slow heartbeat (bradycardia), Chest pain or discomfort, Shortness of breath, Lightheadedness, Dizziness, Fainting.

Signs and symptoms

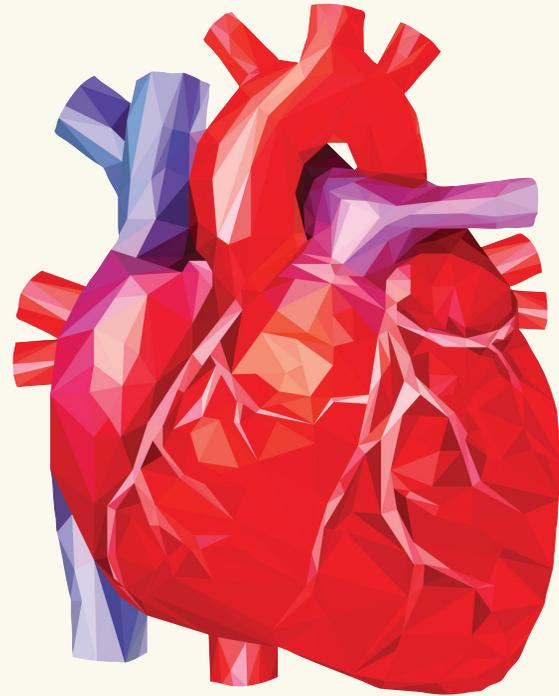
- Easily getting short of breath during exercise or activity
- Easily tiring during exercise or activity
- Swelling in the hands, ankles or feet

Heart disease is easier to treat when detected early, so talk to your doctor about your concerns.

Causes

Family history, smoking, poor diet, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol levels, diabetes, obesity, physical inactivity, stress, poor hygiene.

Symptoms of heart disease in your blood vessels (atherosclerotic disease) Cardiovascular disease symptoms may be different for men and women. For instance, men are more likely to have chest pain; women are more likely to have other symptoms along with chest discomfort, such as shortness of breath, nausea and extreme fatigue.



Complications

Complications of heart disease include: Heart failure, heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, peripheral artery disease, atherosclerosis, sudden cardiac arrest.

Prevention

You can help prevent many types of heart disease by making the same lifestyle changes such as:

- Quit smoking
- Control other health conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes
- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day on most days of the week and maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a diet that's low in salt and saturated fat
- Reduce and manage stress
- Practice good hygiene.

Source: Mayo Clinic Staff