

## Women and Heart Disease

Heart disease has sometimes been thought of as a “man’s disease”, and some women may not take it as seriously as they should. In fact, heart disease is the #1 killer of women, far ahead of breast cancer and even all types of cancer combined.

One in two women in America dies of heart disease or stroke, but only 1 in 30 dies of breast cancer. For women in midlife, taking action is especially important, because the risks of heart disease and heart attack jump dramatically.

If women do have a heart attack, the warning signs are sometimes different than for men. Warning signs for both women and men are:

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body, including one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, light-headedness or breaking into a cold sweat.

Chest discomfort is the main warning sign for men and women, but women are more likely than men to experience the other common symptoms, especially shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Source: National Institutes of Health