

# CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

## Prevention and Control



Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) remain the number one cause of deaths globally: more people die annually from CVDs than from any other cause,

Low- and middle-income countries are disproportionately affected: 82% of CVD deaths take place in low- and middle-income countries and occur almost equally in men and women.

People in low- and middle-income countries are more exposed to risk factors leading to CVDs and other noncommunicable diseases and are less exposed to prevention efforts than people in high-income countries.

## WHAT ARE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES?

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels and include:

- Coronary heart disease – disease of the blood vessels supplying the heart muscle .
- Cerebral-vascular accident / stroke- Rupture of blood vessel(s) in the brain.
- Peripheral arterial disease – disease of blood vessels supplying the arms and legs.
- Rheumatic heart disease – damage to the heart muscle and heart valves from rheumatic fever, caused by streptococcal bacteria.
- Congenital heart disease - malformations of heart structure existing at birth.
- Deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism – blood clots in the leg veins, which can dislodge and move to the heart and lungs.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

There are many possible conditions that follow under the umbrella of heart disease, the related symptoms are numerous. But here are some key symptoms to be aware of:

- Discomfort, pressure, heaviness, or pain in the chest, arm, or below the breastbone
- Discomfort radiating to the back, jaw, throat, or arm
- Fullness, indigestion, or choking feeling (may feel like heartburn)
- Sweating, nausea, vomiting, or dizziness
- Extreme weakness, anxiety, or shortness of breath
- Rapid or irregular heartbeats

What Action to Take:

1. If you experience any of the above symptoms; seek medical attention immediately
  - (a) at your Doctor
  - (b) or at your nearest health facility.

This will ensure prompt diagnosis and treatment – and Saves Your life.

2. Have Regular Health Check –ups:

- Blood Pressure check –up.
- Blood Sugar Levels
- Blood Cholesterol Levels.
- Body Mass Index( Weight / height)

Early Detection and Treatment Saves Life and Reduces Complications and Treatment Costs.

### **RISK FACTORS OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

Risk factors for heart disease in the general population include:

- Unhealthy diet ( lack of or inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables, Salty foods, Fatty / oily foods, Sugary drinks / foods.).
- Lack of physical exercise.
- Smoking or tobacco use.
- High alcohol consumption.
- Overweight and obesity
- Raised Blood Pressure
- Raised Blood Sugar
- Raised Blood Cholesterol levels.
- A family history of heart disease.
- Previous personal history of heart disease.
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- Risk increases with age
- Gender: men are at more risk of heart disease than a premenopausal woman
- HIV / AIDS , ART

### **PREVENTION OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

Majority of the CVDs are preventable – by adopting healthy life styles.

The best way to prevent cardiovascular disease is through adoption of a healthy lifestyle which include:

1. Get some exercise—Make sure your schedule includes at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity 5 to 7 days every week.
  
2. Eat a healthy diet.
  - Choose lean high protein foods: White meat, Chicken, fish, plant protein
  
  - healthy high fibre foods from the list of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. Eliminate unhealthy foods
  
  - Avoid salty foods, fatty / oily foods/ sugary drinks and sweet foods
  
  - Reduce daily salt intake.
  
3. Drink plenty of water – at least 1-2 litres/ day
  
4. Avoid alcohol or drink in moderation.
  
5. Maintain healthy blood pressure and blood sugar under control.
  
6. Maintain blood sugar under control.
  
7. Quit or Don't start smoking.

### **COMBATING THE DISEASE AT BIRTH CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE**

Congenital heart disease refers to a problem with the heart's structure and function due to abnormal heart development before birth. Congenital means present at birth.

During pregnancy, every woman should take a multivitamin that contains folic acid.

All women should avoid using street drugs during pregnancy and try to avoid viral infections, especially those of the upper respiratory tract.

Women also should avoid their exposures to the following during pregnancy:

- Alcohol
  
- Prescription medications, especially lithium and those drugs that treat acne and seizures
  
- X-rays and strong chemicals, such as solvents

Women with diabetes, phenylketonuria (PKU), or seizures should consult their doctors before attempting to conceive.

Women with phenylketonuria (PKU) may need to follow a special diet before pregnancy and during the first trimester.

Couples with family history of congenital heart disease may want to consider genetic counselling before trying to conceive. Genetic counselling can advise parents of the likelihood of having a baby with congenital heart disease.

## CONTROL OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

If you have been diagnosed with heart disease, now is the time to take control of your life and regain good health before it is too late.

Adopt to the above Healthy lifestyles

Learn to manage stress. If you work in a stressful environment, find ways of coping with bickering employees or demanding superiors.

- Try to take frequent breaks to escape tensions whenever possible.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Keep a journal in which you write about nerve-wracking incidents, which has been shown to reduce stress levels and improve immune function.

Do something special for yourself once in a while to offset the negative impact of an unsettling situation.

Get connected. Establish a network of caring friends and close family members with whom you can stay in contact, visit, and share fun activities.

Affection, even the kind shared with household pets or time spent enjoying nature, reduces stress, increases satisfaction, and helps the body to work better.

*Know your Blood Pressure, Blood Sugar and cholesterol levels. Prevention is less expensive than treating CVDs*