



HOLY FAMILY  
PARISH

## PARISH NURSE MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

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# An Update: Women and Heart Disease

*Ez. 11: 19a I will give them a new heart....*

**D**espite the fact that heart disease is the leading cause of death in women in the United States, many healthcare professionals are still unaware of the risk for women and some even fail to follow treatment recommendations. Women have a higher rate of death from cardiovascular disease (CVD) than men. Women often lack knowledge of their risk for CVD. Although knowledge is increasing, it is still frighteningly low.

### Some information that all should be aware of include:

- Women tend to be about ten years older than men when having a heart attack.
- Women are more likely to have other conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and congestive heart failure, making it more vital that they get proper treatment fast. **Women are less likely than men to believe they're having a heart attack, and more likely to delay seeking emergency treatment.**

- ◆ The rates of diagnosis and death from CVD in men are declining. The rates in women are holding steady. However, after menopause the incidence and prevalence equalizes. Premenopausal levels of estrogen offer women some CVD protection. Postmenopausal women who take hormone therapy has increased incidence of thrombotic events such as heart attack and stroke.

- ◆ **Smoking even a few cigarettes a day significantly increases the risk of CVD.** It is estimated that 25% of women smoke and most of these women are postmenopausal women.

- ◆ Elevated cholesterol (dyslipidemia) doubles the risk of CVD compared to women with normal cholesterol.

### Signs and Symptoms of Heart Attack in Women:

It is not enough to know the incidence and prevalence of CVD in women. It is important to know that women's symptoms are different than the typical picture of crushing substernal chest pain that is the "norm" in men. The most common symptom of heart attack in women is some sort of pain, sensation of pressure, or discomfort in the chest. However, it is not always the severe pain that men experience nor is it even the most obvious symptom. Here are some symptoms of attack that are more likely to appear in women than in men.

- Discomfort in the neck, shoulder, back, arm, jaw, throat or abdomen.
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diaphoresis (extreme sweating)
- Dyspnea (difficult breathing)
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Fainting
- Unusual severe fatigue

**Since these symptoms may not be as dramatic as the typical crushing, substernal chest pain, women often delay seeking medical help. The longer the delay, the more serious is the damage to cardiac tissue. Do not delay. If you have any of these symptoms, tell someone you are having a heart attack and to call 911 emergency ASAP. If you are alone at home, get to a phone and call 911. The life you save may be your own or someone else's life.**

*Reference for this article was from The Nightingale, official Newsletter of the National Association of Physician Nurses Vol. 39, No.8 November/December 2012.*

***Spring is coming! Your Parish Nurse.***

To contact Holy Family Parish Nurse call 330-688-6412 ext. 462. or for other articles go to [www.holyfamilystow.org/Parish Nurse](http://www.holyfamilystow.org/Parish%20Nurse), or visit Holy Family Lower Church Hall Parish Nurse Bulletin Board for other updated and new health information.