

Take this message to heart: you can control your cardiovascular risk



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What if I told you that, when it comes to our health, women have been told to focus on the wrong things?

The importance of PAP smears and mammograms for cancer prevention are common knowledge among women, although heart disease kills more women each year than all cancers combined, and accounts for almost seven times as many deaths as breast cancer.¹ Cardiovascular risk prevention simply hasn't received the same attention. High cholesterol is a silent condition and a major contributor to heart attack risk in women.²

If you didn't know that cardiovascular disease was the leading killer of women, you're in good company: Awareness of heart disease and heart attack as the leading cause of death declined among women between 2009 and 2019.¹ It's clear we have not been successful in helping people – and women specifically – understand the importance of cardiovascular risk. In parallel, declines in cardiovascular disease among women have stagnated and begun to reverse. The delay of preventive care in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic will likely exacerbate this trend. Women's cardiovascular health is worse than ever.

The positive way to see this? There's no better time than now to focus on your health. You can take control and lower your cardiovascular risk. You'll see a lot of information this month, National Cholesterol Education Month, on what cholesterol is, why it matters, and what you can do about it.

Women tend to put themselves last; concerns for the health of those around them come first. But knowing about your cholesterol for is important for you and your family – [familial hypercholesterolemia](#) (FH), which increases cholesterol in young, otherwise healthy people, is genetic. Understanding cardiovascular risk is especially important if we're making health decisions for other family members. If you don't know the facts, it's likely that other people in your family are confused. [FH Awareness Day](#) is September 24 and provides another great opportunity this month to learn more.

The healthcare industry can do more to make taking care of our heart health easy for women. Recent studies show physicians don't adhere to guidelines when it comes to helping women control their high cholesterol, which means your risk may not be as low as it could be.²

Women have been left out of clinical research on heart disease,³ particularly in high cholesterol – in the longer term, we need to develop more data and better understanding of how high cholesterol impacts women's health and which interventions work best for them. At Esperion, we are making important strides to help understand how women can manage their risk and hopefully prevent heart disease with our CLEAR Outcomes study, which has enrolled a higher proportion of women than any previous cardiovascular outcomes trial. Finally, expanding gender diversity within healthcare companies and among healthcare professionals can only help drive more attention to women's health.

I want to hear from you: What more can healthcare professionals and the healthcare industry do to support women in improving their cardiovascular health?

Learn More:

[Information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) on women and heart disease](#)

[CardioSmart: Women and Heart Disease](#)

[CardioSmart: Be Your Own Heart Hero](#)

[HealthyWomen: Clinically Speaking: Questions to Ask Your HCP About Cardiovascular Disease](#)

[HealthyWomen: What you Need to Know about Cholesterol](#)

[WomenHeart: Your Heart Journey: Prevent](#)

[Go Red for Women: The Facts about Women and Heart Disease](#)

[Familial Hypercholesterolemia \(FH\) Foundation: Do You #KnowFH? infographic](#)

[FH Foundation: Cholesterol Basics Webinar \(Sept. 1, 2021\)](#)

¹ Cushman M; Shay CM; Howard VJ; et al. Ten-Year Differences in Women's Awareness Related to Coronary Heart Disease: Results of the 2019 American Heart Association National Survey: A Special Report From the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 21 Sep 2020.
<https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000907> *Circulation*. 2021;143:e239–e248.

² Vogel B, MD; Acevedo M, MD; Appelman Y, MD; et al. The Lancet women and cardiovascular disease Commission: reducing the global burden by 2030. *The Lancet*.
16 May 2021. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00684-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00684-X). 2021;397,10292,P2385-2438.

³ ACC News. Women Underrepresented in CV Clinical Trials Despite Inclusivity Requirements. 09 August 2021. <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2021/08/09/20/01/women-underrepresented-in-cv-clinical-trials-despite-inclusivity-requirements>