



WOMEN'S HEALTH

You And Your Doctor: A Heart-Healthy Partnership

(NAPSA)—When you hear the term “heart disease,” you may think, “That’s a man’s disease.” But one in four women dies of heart disease, while one in 30 dies of breast cancer.

Millions of women have learned that heart disease is the No.1 killer of women. A new survey from *The Heart Truth*, a national campaign for women about heart disease, shows that 69 percent of women are aware.

Yet many women haven’t taken this message to heart, and many still underestimate their own personal risk of getting heart disease. Underestimating your risk can have serious consequences. If you have just one risk factor—like high blood pressure or being overweight—your risk of heart disease doubles.

A crucial step in determining your risk is to see your doctor for a thorough checkup. Your doctor is an important partner in helping you set and reach goals for heart health. But don’t wait for your doctor to mention heart disease or its risk factors. Many doctors don’t routinely bring up the subject with women patients.

Here are a few questions to ask your doctor that will give you vital information about your heart health:

1. What is my risk for heart disease?
2. What is my blood pressure? What does it mean for me, and what do I need to do about it?
3. What are my cholesterol numbers? (These include total cholesterol, LDL—or “bad”—cholesterol, HDL—or “good”—cholesterol and triglycerides.) What do they mean for me, and what do I need to do about them?
4. What is my “body mass



Women can begin to take control of their heart health by bringing up the topic with their doctor.

index” and waist measurement? Do they indicate that I need to lose weight for my health?

5. What is my blood sugar level, and does it mean I’m at risk for diabetes?

6. What other screening tests for heart disease do I need? How often should I return for checkups for my heart health?

7. What can you do to help me quit smoking?

8. How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?

9. What is a heart-healthy eating plan for me? Should I see a registered dietitian or qualified nutritionist to learn more about healthy eating?

10. How can I tell if I’m having a heart attack?

The Heart Truth is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health. NHLBI provided these Questions to Ask Your Doctor. For the most recent information on women’s heart disease and practical suggestions for reducing your own risk, visit www.hearttruth.gov.