

# HEART DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

**Coronary heart disease (CHD)** – often simply called heart disease – is the main form of cardiovascular disease. It is a disorder of the blood vessels of the heart that can lead to heart attack. Heart disease is a lifelong condition – once you get it, you'll always have it.

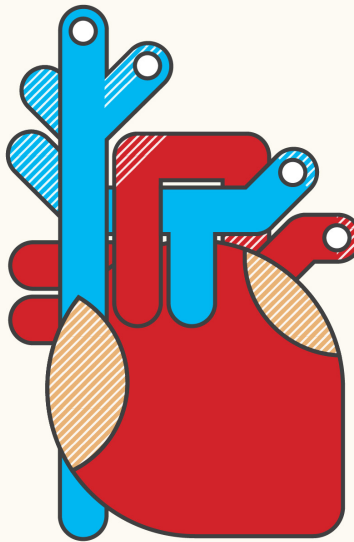
NORMAL ARTERY



CLOGGED ARTERY



A heart attack happens when an artery becomes blocked, preventing oxygen and nutrients from getting to the heart.



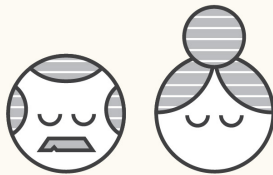
Research suggests that CHD begins with damage to the lining and inner layers of the coronary (heart) arteries. Several factors contribute to this damage, including:

- Smoking, including second-hand smoke;
- High amounts of certain fats and cholesterol in the blood;
- High blood pressure;
- High amounts of sugar in the blood due to insulin resistance or diabetes; and
- Blood vessel inflammation

Other cardiovascular diseases include stroke, high blood pressure, angina (chest pain), and rheumatic heart disease.

## THEN:

In the 1960s, it was not uncommon for Americans to die of heart attacks in their



**50s or 60s.**



The U.S. death rate for CHD rose steadily during the first half of the 20th century, reaching a peak in 1968. If this rate were applied to today's national population, more than 1.7 million lives would be lost to heart disease each year.

## TODAY:

Fortunately, health care education and action has driven the toll *downward* – there are about

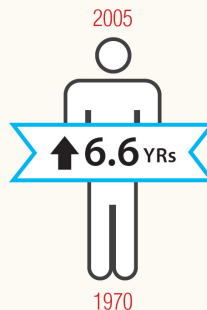
**425,000  
DEATHS**

each year from heart disease.

In addition, the death rate from stroke, the 3rd most common cause of death, has declined by about

**↓ 75%**

since the early 1960s.



Between 1970 and 2005, the **life expectancy of the average person** in America increased by 6.6 years.

Of that, 4.7 years – **more than 70%** of the increase – is due to reductions in deaths from cardiovascular disease.

The cause of **broken heart syndrome** isn't yet known. However, a sudden release of stress hormones may play a role in causing the disorder. Most cases of broken heart syndrome occur in women who have gone through menopause.

