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WOMENHEART



Heart disease is a serious health concern for women, with 44% of women in the U.S. having some form of heart disease, greatly affecting their health and quality of life. While climate change itself doesn't directly cause heart disease, it can impact factors like air quality, extreme temperatures, and stress, which can influence a woman's risk of developing cardiovascular (CV) disease. Understanding how climate change affects these factors is important for promoting women's heart health and overall well-being.



CLIMATE & HEART DISEASE



WOMENHEART

THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR
WOMEN WITH HEART DISEASE



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WOMENHEART: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the nation's first and still only patient centered organization serving millions of American women living with or at risk for heart disease — the leading cause of death in women. WomenHeart is solely devoted to advancing women's heart health through advocacy, community education, and the nation's only patient support network for women living with heart disease. WomenHeart is both a coalition and a community of thousands of members nationwide, including women heart patients and their families, physicians, and health advocates, all committed to helping women live longer, healthier lives. To learn more or to donate visit womenheart.org.

CLIMATE & HEART DISEASE

As global temperatures rise and weather patterns change, the impact of climate change on cardiovascular health becomes clear. Knowing how these changes can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease helps women take better care of their heart health. This knowledge can help reduce illness and save lives in the future.



EXTREME WEATHER



Extreme Heat

Heat waves, or very hot weather lasting two or more days, will happen more often and last longer due to climate change. This extreme heat can stress your heart as your body tries to cool down. Here are some important points:

- **Heat stress** reduces the amount of fluid, making blood thicker and more likely to clot and potentially reducing blood pressure.
- **Higher daily temperatures** are linked to more heart problems, including heart attacks and deaths in people with heart failure.


Extreme Cold

Extreme cold can make your heart work harder, worsening high blood pressure and heart failure. Abnormally cold temperatures can increase the risk of:

- Death from cardiovascular disease (CVD)
- Death from coronary artery disease (CAD)
- New cases of coronary artery disease

The link between extreme cold and new cases of coronary artery disease is stronger among women.



 The relationship between cold weather and heart disease is more pronounced in people living in neighborhoods with a low socioeconomic status.

Natural Disasters



Climate change may cause more severe and frequent natural disasters. These disasters can't be avoided and can increase the risk of heart disease. But you can take steps to protect yourself:

If you live in an area with a high risk of natural disasters:

- Keep your medication ready to take in case you need to leave your home in a hurry.
- Ask your doctor about avoiding diuretics during a natural disaster, as they can cause dehydration if water is limited.



AIR POLLUTION

Air pollution is a major result of climate change and can greatly affect heart health, especially for women. Short and long-term exposure to air pollution is linked to:

- More women having and dying from heart disease
- A higher risk of irregular heartbeat, including atrial fibrillation

- ! Women with diabetes are especially sensitive to the harmful heart effects of air pollution.
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What Can I Do?

Climate change can be uncertain, but there are actions you can take to reduce the risk for you and others.

- **Modify your eating habits:** Reduce consumption of red meats to protect your heart health.
- **Choose active transport for prevention:** When possible, walk or cycle instead of driving.
 - Women who walked or cycled to and from work had a reduced risk of CVD.
 - Regular commuting by car is linked to higher risk of heart attacks compared to commuting by bus, cycling, or walking.
- **Advocate:** Support policies and community programs that reduce air pollution and promote a healthier environment.



In cases of extreme heat, increase your fluid intake without waiting for thirst, wear loose-fitting clothing, and take frequent showers or baths.

On days with a high air pollution level:

- Stay indoors
- Clean the indoor air via an air cleaning system
- Avoid vigorous, extended outdoor activity

