



# Are You at Risk?

## What You Need to Know About Heart Disease

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Did you know that after the age of twenty our vascular systems begin to accumulate plaque? Tiny plaque deposits can embed themselves into our delicate vascular structure throughout our entire bodies. Over time the sticky plaque can mount up and cause hardening of the arteries, block oxygen-rich blood from reaching our hearts, or cause clots to form and break off.

If we fail to put our health in the forefront, we will very likely be in danger of issues such as a stroke, heart disease, or sudden cardiac arrest. If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, or a family history of vascular disorders, you are at an even higher risk level. If you smoke, drink too much alcohol, are sedentary, or regularly eat "junk food," then your risk factors are ultimately elevated.

**It's critical to ask yourself these two important questions: do you have the risk factors associated with heart disease, and are you at risk for a heart attack?**

The American Heart Association describes a heart attack in this way, "Your heart muscle needs oxygen to survive. A heart attack occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or cut off completely (View an animation of blood flow). This happens because coronary arteries that supply the heart muscle with blood flow can slowly become narrow from a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances that together are called plaque. This slow process is known as atherosclerosis. When a plaque in a heart artery breaks, a blood clot forms around the plaque. This blood clot can block the blood flow through the heart muscle. When the heart muscle is starved of oxygen and nutrients, it is called ischemia. When damage or death of part of the heart muscle occurs as a result of ischemia, it is called a heart attack or myocardial infarction (MI). About every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a myocardial infarction (heart attack)."



### Heart Attack Symptoms

- Abnormal heart palpitations
- Anxiety
- Arm/Shoulder Pain
- Chest Pain and tightness
- Dizzy
- Gray color to skin
- Lightheaded
- Rapid heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Tired/Fatigue

If you have any of the symptoms above, please call 911. The sooner you get treated, the better your chances of survival.

Over 325,000 people will experience a sudden cardiac arrest per year. It is the number one cause of death in the United States, leaving 90 percent of its victims deceased. Unlike Cardiac Arrest (a heart attack), where a portion of the heart stops due to a blockage, in the case of Sudden Cardiac Arrest, it's not a blockage problem; it's an electrical stimulation problem. If defibrillation is not administered immediately, the likelihood of survival is bleak. A defibrillator sends an electric shock to the heart that stops the heart's ventricle fibrillation (an irregular arrhythmia) so that it can start beating and pumping normally again.

If a person experiences a sudden cardiac arrest and an AED (automated external defibrillator) is not available, CPR (Cardio pulmonary resuscitation) should be administered until defibrillation can be applied. This is the reason that many public places, like airports, sports venues, shopping centers, hotels, and more have automated external defibrillators available. The AED's can detect whether or not the person is truly suffering from a serious arrhythmia, and only sends the shock to the heart if this has occurred. This prevents the average person from making the error of seeing a person fainting and mistakenly thinking that they are in a life-threatening case of a sudden cardiac arrest. AED's are straightforward and easy for anyone to use, but because we are dealing with the perilous seconds of someone's life, sometimes AED's are not used quickly enough.

### Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms

- Chest Pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shortness of Breath
- Light Headed

At Cardiac Care Group, they take your symptoms seriously and are prepared to see you and to discuss your conditions. They specialize in providing a wide range of services that focus on the prevention, prompt diagnosis and state-of-the-art treatment of cardiovascular disease.

### Joseph Freedman, M.D.

Dr. Freedman brings many years of experience as a cutting edge cardiologist specializing in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all cardiac disease. He trained at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic, continually ranked #1 in Cardiovascular Care, where he focused on cardiac imaging. He achieved five board certifications in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Comprehensive Adult ECHO, Nuclear Cardiology and Cardiac CT. During his tenure as the lead noninvasive cardiologist at Florida Medical Center in Ft. Lauderdale, he helped lead the hospital to achieve Level 5 chest pain certification, the highest designation of cardiac excellence.



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