

February is Heart Health Awareness Month

Heart Disease Symptoms Differ Between Sexes

Women's heart disease develops differently than men's and often progresses over a much longer period of time. Heart disease is the number one cause of death for American women, according to the American Medical Association (AMA).

Women's heart disease symptoms can also be more subtle than men's symptoms, and they can lead physicians to explore other possible causes rather than a disorder of the heart.

A study funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research found that women often have warning signs of a heart attack for a considerable period of time before having one.

Below is an overview of the most significant symptoms for women, compared with the symptoms for men.

Women's symptoms

- Trouble sleeping.
- Shortness of breath.
- Anxiety.
- Unusual fatigue. Fatigue associated with heart disease is usually overwhelming and not typical for the person.
- Dizziness. Unexplained lightheadedness, even blackouts.
- Edema. Swelling, particularly of the ankles and/or lower legs.
- Fluttering (or rapid) heartbeats.
- Indigestion, gastric upset or nausea.

Men's symptoms

- Sudden pressure, tightness, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and then comes back.
- Pain that radiates from the center of the chest to the shoulders, neck or arms.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.
- Sudden onset of rapid heartbeats.

Women are less likely to experience painful symptoms of heart disease, such as angina. If women do have heart disease pain, it may be in the stomach area instead of on the left side of the chest, as it often is in men, the AMA says. Stomach pain or discomfort in women may be diagnosed as heartburn or indigestion rather than heart disease.

Because the symptoms of heart disease in women either are absent or are so different from those of men -- and thus ignored -- the first heart attack for women can be fatal, the AMA says.

In general, risk factors for heart disease do not differ between men and women. Risk factors are:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Family history of heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Being overweight
- Little or no regular exercise
- Diabetes

From MerckSource

In a new partnership, MerckEngage.com gives you health tools with just a click

Free health support programs that offer a range of resources covering nutrition, physical activities, and treatment plan help are now available to Pottstown Medical Specialists Inc. (PMSI) patients, thanks to a new partnership forged between the practice and MerckEngage.com.



tools that can keep their healthy lifestyles on track. It supplies step-by-step guidance on things like meal planning (see recipe below).

MerckEngage.com is a website sponsored by Merck Pharmaceuticals, the company that makes medications you may use regularly. It provides a convenient, easy, and no-cost way for PMSI patients to keep up-to-date on health topics, receive education and tips between office visits, and take advantage of easy-to-use



New, and created with you in mind!

Welcome to PMSI's third patient newsletter. You can look forward to monthly editions with tips to improve your health. Visit our website, **pmsiforlife.com**, for more information.

It offers prescription savings cards for eligible patients taking certain Merck medications. And patients can talk one-on-one with a health coach ... all at no charge!

Here at PMSI, we do hope you're getting some form of regular exercise. Even a little is better than none! For those who are exercise beginners, as well as those who are veteran exercise buffs, MerckEngage.com lets PMSI patients access an activity planning tool that could make a difference in how you feel about, and what benefits you're getting from, an exercise routine.

If you're following a treatment plan suggested by a PMSI physician, MerckEngage.com supplies a simple tracking tool that lets you monitor your health condition on your own, as well as share progress updates with PMSI staff members at our various offices in Bally, Boyertown, Collegeville, Pottstown, Phoenixville, Royersford, and Stowe.

The next time you visit a PMSI office, ask your physician or a staff member about how you can take advantage of all MerckEngage.com has to offer.

It's not too late to get your flu shot! Immunizations are recommended by the national centers for Disease Control for everyone age 6 months and older. PMSI makes it quick and convenient to get yours.



Black Bean Corn Salad

Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen, whole-kernel corn
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ (15-oz) can low-sodium black beans, drained
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped green bell pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped red bell pepper
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped red onion
- 2 tbsp salsa
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped cilantro
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt-free Mrs. Dash[†] Lemon Pepper Seasoning Blend



Directions

- In a small saucepan bring the corn and water to a boil. Cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Drain water and set aside to cool to room temperature.
- In a large bowl combine the black beans, peppers, onion, salsa, cilantro, lime juice, cumin, and salt-free seasoning
- Add the corn to the bean mixture and mix well

Makes 4 servings

Calories 106

Total Fat 1g
Saturated Fat 0g
Total Carbohydrates 22g
Dietary Fiber 4g

Cholesterol 0mg
Sodium 134mg
Protein 5g