

## Cardiovascular Disease: Questions Women Should Ask Their Doctors

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### ***About Your Risk:***

- What is my overall risk for heart disease?
- What lifestyle changes can I start making to improve my heart health?
- What tests should I have to monitor my risk factors for developing heart disease or other cardiovascular diseases? How often do I need these screenings?
- What are my blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels? What do these test results mean?
- How much exercise do I need to help protect my heart?
- Should I take aspirin to help prevent a heart attack? If so, how much and how often?
- Am I at high risk for heart-related complications if I take birth control pills or other hormone-based contraceptives?
- I've heard the warning signs of a heart attack can be different in women. What should I look for?

### ***About Diagnosis:***

- What is the technical name of my disease or condition, and what does it mean in lay terms?
- Will I need any additional tests?
- What lifestyle changes will I need to make to improve my health?
- Is there a chance someone else in my family might get the same condition?
- Will I need special help at home for my condition?
- Is there a clinical trial (research study) that is right for me?
- What organizations and resources do you recommend for support and information?

### ***About Screening:***

- What is this test and why are you recommending it?
- What information will this test provide? Are there other ways to obtain the information?
- How will the test results affect my care?
- How accurate is the test? Has it been proven safe and reliable in women?
- How should I prepare for the test? When can I eat/drink before and after it?
- Who will perform the test? Where will it be conducted? How often has that person/lab performed the test during the past year?
- What dangers or risks are associated with this test?
- Will I be awake during the test? Will it hurt or be uncomfortable?
- How long will the test last? When can I go home? Will I need to arrange for transportation?
- Will there be any pain or side effects after the test?
- How and when will I receive the test results?
- How much will the test cost me?

### ***About Treatment:***

- What are my treatment options?
- How soon do I need to make a decision about treatment?
- What are the benefits and risks associated with my treatment options?

*If your doctor suggests angioplasty:*

- What is angioplasty and how is it performed?
- How do doctors decide whether medications alone, angioplasty/stenting or bypass surgery is the right option for me?
- Will I receive a stent? What kind of stent do you plan to insert?
- What are the risks and possible complications associated with the procedure?
- What is the success rate of angioplasty?
- What do I need to do to prepare for angioplasty and stenting?
- What should I expect after an angioplasty procedure? How much time will I need to recover?
- Will my arteries re-narrow or become blocked again?
- What kind of care is necessary after angioplasty? What medications will I need to take and for how long?
- What happens if angioplasty/stenting doesn't work out as planned? Will I receive bypass surgery?

*If your doctor suggests bypass surgery:*

- What is bypass surgery and how is it performed?
- How do doctors decide whether angioplasty/stenting, or bypass surgery is the better treatment option?
- Will bypass surgery "cure" my disease?
- What is the success rate of bypass surgery?
- What are the risks and complications of bypass surgery?
- What can I do to prepare for bypass surgery so I have the best chance at a successful operation and recovery?
- What should I expect after bypass surgery? How much time will I need to recover?
- Will my arteries re-narrow or become blocked again? If so, is there a certain time period in which this would happen?

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Sources: [www.WomenHeart.org](http://www.WomenHeart.org) and [www.Seconds-Count.org](http://www.Seconds-Count.org)