

## Matters of the heart

This February marks the 10th anniversary of the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" movement. As part of this initiative, people are encouraged to raise awareness about women and heart disease by wearing red on the first Friday in February.

Heart disease is the number one killer of women, causing one in three deaths each year. More women die of heart disease than from all types of cancer combined.

Although heart disease does not always have symptoms, there are warning signs for heart attacks. The most common sign among both women and men is pain or pressure in the center of the chest. Other signs of a heart attack may include:

- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms
- Upper body pain in the back, neck or jaw
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling faint or lightheaded
- Nausea and vomiting
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Heartburn
- Rapid or irregular heartbeats
- Feeling tired or weak
- Loss of appetite
- Coughing

The signs of a heart attack can happen suddenly, or may develop slowly over hours and even weeks before a heart attack occurs. If you think you or someone you know is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately. Getting help quickly can save your life and prevent permanent damage to your heart. Treatment works best within an hour of when symptoms begin.

A healthy lifestyle can lower your risk for heart disease. Being smoke-free, eating healthy, staying active and maintaining a healthy weight are some of the steps you can take to maintain good heart health. In addition, be sure to get regular checkups from a health care provider. Ask your provider if you're at risk for heart disease, and what you can do to lower your risk.

If you would like more information about the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" initiative, please visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org).