

Heart Disease

Body Part

Cardiovascular System

Condition:

Heart disease, or cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the disease of the heart and its vessels. It is a group of diseases that include high blood pressure (hypertension), coronary heart disease, stroke, peripheral vascular disease and heart failure.

Summary

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Australia and is often caused by a number of risk factors. These risk factors include:

- lack of physical activity
- unhealthy diet
- smoking
- overweight or obesity
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- diabetes
- age
- family history of heart disease

Most heart diseases are caused by atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is the thickening of the artery wall over time due to plaque build up. The arteries are important blood vessels that deliver oxygenated blood to the body. Plaque can build up over time, often from an early age, and is made up of fats, cholesterol, calcium and cellular waste products. Plaque build up blocks the flow of blood through the artery, reducing oxygen supply to the heart and body.

Symptoms:

Common symptoms of heart disease include:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Dizziness or fainting

- Heart palpitations

However, often no symptoms are experienced before a major cardiac event such as heart attack or stroke occurs.

Treatment:

Prevention is the best medicine when it comes to heart disease. By changing the modifiable risk factors for heart disease, you can reduce your risk of developing the disease. Diet and exercise are two modifiable lifestyle factors that are important in reducing the risk of heart disease. By improving diet and physical activity levels you can also reduce the risk of developing high blood pressure and high cholesterol, as well as reduce the risk of overweight and obesity. Medications are also commonly prescribed to people who have risk factors such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

People who are already living with heart disease should make lifestyle changes, such as improved diet and exercise, to reduce their risk of the disease developing further. Exercise is important post a cardiac event as it improves cardiac function, endothelial function, aerobic function, decreases blood pressure and improves cholesterol levels.

Prognosis:

Heart disease is a lifelong chronic condition that needs to be managed once it has developed. Fortunately, heart disease can be very well managed through lifestyle changes.

Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link:

<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/qJq5hA4pnOk/maxresdefault.jpg>

https://www.kieser.com.au/fileadmin/_processed_/8/7/csm_Cardiovasculariseaseepidemiology-2000_x_1000_68668f0481.jpg

<https://www.gilmorehealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Atherosclerosis.jpg>