

FEBRUARY Health Topic

Heart Disease



INSTITUTE FOR
WOMEN'S HEALTH
RESEARCH™
AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Heart disease is a general term to describe various diseases and syndromes of the heart and blood vessels. Included in the definition are diseases such as coronary artery disease, heart arrhythmia, heart valve disease, heart failure, and congenital heart defects, among others.

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women worldwide, but may be prevented or treated with healthy lifestyle choices. The symptoms of heart disease vary depending on the specific condition but include chest pain, shortness of breath, fluttering in the chest, swelling in the lower limbs, and fatigue. Causes of heart and cardiovascular disease include poor diet, little exercise, obesity, smoking, and high blood pressure, but may also be caused by congenital defects. A healthy diet and exercise along with maintenance of blood pressure, cholesterol, and stress may help reduce the risk of heart disease. Treatments for heart disease include lifestyle changes, medication, and in some cases surgery. Heart disease is best treated when diagnosed early.

Resources at Northwestern for Heart Disease

The Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute at NMH offers state-of-the-art treatment in all areas of cardiovascular care. Patients receive a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to treatment and prevention in areas such as cardiology, cardiac surgery, vascular medicine and surgery, cardiovascular anesthesiology, cardiac behavioral medicine and radiology, among others. The Institute is comprised of 6 heart health centers for

atrial fibrillation, coronary disease, heart failure, heart valve disease, vascular disease, and women's cardiovascular health. The Women's Cardiovascular Health Center offers treatment specifically designed for women, tailoring treatment plans to optimize their specific cardiovascular needs. The Center is also committed to promoting women's awareness of cardiovascular health, highlighting the differences in symptoms and risk factors for women. *For more information call: (866) 662-8467 (toll free).*

Northwestern Physicians/ Researchers specializing in Heart Disease

Researchers at the Feinberg Cardiovascular Research Institute are committed to exploring complex problems in cardiovascular research including molecular, cellular, stem cell and imaging technology research. Investigators in the Cardiovascular Regenerative Medicine program seek new ways of growing new cardiac tissue as opposed to improving function of damaged tissues. The program provides researchers with the means to translate basic science research into clinical trials. Led by Dr. Douglas Losordo clinical trials are being conducted for treatment in the areas of coronary artery disease, heart failure, and vascular disease.

For more information visit: ● <http://www.fcvi.northwestern.edu/index.html>

IWHR Highlighted Researcher

Dr. Nalini Rajamannan is the Valve Director for the Bluhm Cardiovascular Center and Associate Professor at the FSM. She is the Chair of the Midwest

Society for the American Federation for Medical Research and is currently listed as one of the Best Doctors in America as voted for by her peers in Cardiology. Dr. Rajamannan is a principal investigator on a clinical trial related to aortic valve disease, specifically on medical therapy to slow the progression of this disease in order to delay and/or avoid surgery in the future for these patients. In the past, she has received several research grants from the American Heart Association and the National Institute of Health. Currently, Dr. Rajamannan holds a NIH R01 research grant that focuses on the experimental causes of aortic valve disease. These studies will allow physicians and patients to understand the risk factors, mechanisms and possible genetic causes that put patients at risk for this disease. In the future, patients with a heart murmur may benefit from this work with the use of medical therapies to try and avoid open heart surgery.

Useful Links and Resources:

- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=I200000>
- <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/>
- <http://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/default.htm>

Upcoming Conferences/Symposiums/Events:

NMH Annual Cardiovascular Symposium: *Heart Health – What Smart Women Need to Know*, February 4, 2009, Prentice Women's Hospital

- <http://www.nmh.org/nmh/events/viewevent2.htm?etid=3055>

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