

Her Heart, Her Health

Dispelling the myths surrounding women and heart disease



Ladies, lend us your ears and hearts! We're here to debunk five heart disease myths and leave you with a smile on your face and knowledge in your pocket.

Myth 1

Heart disease is primarily a man's problem.

The Heart Truth:

- ♥ While there is data indicating that the incidence of heart disease is greater among men than women, it is an undeniable reality that heart disease stands as the primary cause of death for both genders globally.
- ♥ Consequently, there exists a critical misconception that heart disease primarily affects men. Unfortunately, this misunderstanding can result in delayed diagnosis and treatment for women, as their symptoms might be disregarded or misattributed to other medical conditions.



Myth 2

Heart disease risk factors are the same for men and women.

The Heart Truth:

- ♥ Although there are certain risk factors for heart disease that apply to both men and women, there are also significant distinctions between the two.
- ♥ For instance, findings from The Malaysian National Cardiovascular Disease Database–Acute Coronary Syndrome (NCVD-ACS) eRegistry revealed that female patients in Malaysia who presented with Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) tended to be older and had a higher likelihood of having co-existing conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, previous heart failures, and strokes compared to men.

Myth 3

Heart disease is characterised by the same symptoms in men and women.

The Heart Truth:

- ♥ In both men and women, the most common symptom of a heart attack is some form of chest pain, pressure, or discomfort lasting more than a few minutes or occurring intermittently.
- ♥ However, it's essential to note that chest pain is not always severe or easily noticeable, especially in women.
- ♥ Women may experience heart attack symptoms that differ from those typically associated with men. They might describe the pain as more of a pressure or tightness sensation.
- ♥ It's possible for a heart attack to occur without chest pain in women. Instead, they might have subtler symptoms, such as shortness of breath, fatigue, back pain, nausea, or jaw pain.
- ♥ Due to the atypical nature of these symptoms, women might not immediately recognise them as indications of a heart problem. Consequently, there is a risk of delayed medical attention-seeking in such cases.



Myth 4

Estrogen protects women from heart disease.

The Heart Truth:

- ♥ Initially, it was thought that estrogen, a hormone more abundant in women, offered substantial protection against heart disease.
- ♥ Nevertheless, recent studies have revealed a more intricate connection between estrogen and heart health.
- ♥ Although estrogen may have certain protective effects on blood vessels, it does not fully guard women against heart disease.
- ♥ Moreover, the protective benefits of estrogen diminish after menopause, and other risk factors gain prominence in contributing to heart disease in women.



Myth 5

Heart disease is less severe in women compared to men.

The Heart Truth:

- ♥ This is not the reality, as heart disease can be equally severe in both genders. It remains the leading cause of death among men and women.
- ♥ Women may face a higher risk of certain types of heart disease. For instance, hormonal changes after menopause can increase their vulnerability to coronary artery disease.
- ♥ According to a report published by the Ministry of Health (Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease In Women 2016), cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the primary cause of death among women worldwide, including Malaysia. 💙

