

HEARTH HEALTH



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Heart disease

Heart disease may include a number of **heart conditions** or problems, such as **angina, heart failure or abnormal heart rhythms**. If you think that you may have a heart problem, you should speak to a doctor or medical practitioner.



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Symptoms

Watch out for the following, but be aware that symptoms do vary from person to person:

Heavy pressure, tightness, crushing pain or unusual discomfort in the centre of the chest.

This may feel like indigestion, spread to shoulders, arms, neck or jaw and/or last for more than 15 minutes. It may stop or weaken and then return.

Sweating, sickness, faintness or shortness of breath may be experienced.

There may be a rapid, weak pulse.

Sharp stabbing pain in the left side of the chest is usually NOT heart pain.



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Prevention

There's lots you can do to keep your heart healthy, no matter how old you are.

By eating a **healthy diet, exercising regularly and being aware of risk factors** such as smoking, drinking, drugs, high blood pressure, obesity and stress, you can do a lot to ensure that you keep yourself healthy



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HYPERTENSION



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BACKGROUND

- Also known as high blood pressure.
- It is known as the “silent killer” because there are not many visible symptoms to warn a person that their pressure is high – there is no pain, discomfort or increase in the body’s temperature
- If left untreated for a long time, high blood pressure can lead to kidney failure and damaged sight.
- High blood pressure is also one of the leading causes of heart attack, stroke.



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WHAT IS HYPERTENSION

- Hypertension is a condition where blood pressure rises and remains above 140/90.
- It is a chronic condition and does not spread from one person to another.
- Hypertension cannot be cured but the patient together with the health care professional can manage it.



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Non-modifiable risk factors include:

- family history of high blood pressure
- age: the risk of developing high blood pressure increases with age.
- racial group – the South African black population are at a higher risk of developing hypertension
- pregnancy
- certain medication like birth control pills (contraceptives)

Modifiable risk factors include:

- tobacco use
- alcohol abuse
- little or no physical activity
- being overweight
- an unhealthy diet (includes eating a lot of salt, fats and sugars)
- stress



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MANAGEMENT

Taking medication, as prescribed, to reduce high blood pressure

Eating 3 regular, small meals a day

Eating a healthy balanced diet that includes fruit and vegetables

Limit salt intake to one teaspoon per day

Limit the amount of alcohol consumed – as per the recommendations on the mind map

Regular, moderate intensity exercise – at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week

Reduce stress



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CHRONIC DISEASE OF LIFESTYLE

STROKE



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DEFINITION

- A stroke happens when the blood flow to the brain is interrupted
- This could happen when a blood vessel to the brain ruptures, this causes bleeding or becomes blocked by a blood clot
- The brain cells start to die because of lack of oxygen and other nutrients
- Severity varies from passing weakness or tingling in a limb to a profound paralysis, coma or death



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An aneurism can happen in any blood vessel which supplies the brain

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Facts

Hypertension is the most important modifiable risk factor for **coronary heart disease (CHD)**, **stroke**, **congestive heart failure (CHF)**, end-stage **renal disease** and peripheral vascular disease.

As hypertension rarely causes specific symptoms, it is undetected until an individual's blood pressure is measured by a physician or until it had caused complications such as **stroke** or **heart attack**.



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Facts

- Between 1997 and 2004, **195 people died per day** of some form of heart and blood vessel disease in South Africa
- About 33 people die per day because of heart attack, while **60 die per day because of stroke**
- More than half of the deaths caused by Chronic diseases, including heart disease, occur before 65 years of age. These are premature deaths which affect the workforce and have a major impact on the economy of the country



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Facts

- Premature deaths caused by heart and blood disease in people of working age (35-64 years) are expected to increase by 41% between 2000 and 2030
- The highest death rates for these are found in Indian people, followed by coloured people, while the white and black African people have the lowest rates
- Although the rates are similar, patterns differ. Whites reflect a pattern of death caused by heart attacks, while the black African people die mainly because of stroke and hypertension



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Stroke symptoms usually come on suddenly, and should always be treated as a medical emergency. They include a sudden onset of any of the following:

- Weakness of the face, arm, and/or leg on one side of body
- Numbness in the face, arm, and/or leg one side of body
- Inability to understand spoken language
- Inability to speak
- Inability to write
- Vertigo and/or gait imbalance
- Double vision
- An unusually severe headache



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Do all strokes cause headaches?

Only a small proportion of strokes produce headache symptoms. However, the sudden onset of a severe headache makes doctors suspect that there is bleeding inside the brain. Because of the high risk of death in these cases, people who come into the emergency room complaining of severe headache are rapidly screened for the presence of blood in the brain.



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Are the symptoms of stroke permanent?

Whether or not the symptoms of a stroke will be permanent depends on how long the affected part of the brain remains without blood flow.



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What determines how severe the symptoms of a stroke will be?

The severity of stroke symptoms varies depending on the part of the brain that is affected. For instance, strokes that affect areas of the brain which have minimal importance in day to day brain activity typically produce mild or unnoticeable symptoms. By contrast, strokes that affect areas of the brain which have maximal importance in day to day brain activity cause the most debilitating and noticeable symptoms.

For instance strokes affecting one of the smell areas of the brain rarely cause identifiable symptoms. By contrast strokes affecting one of the speech areas of the brain nearly always do.



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Why do strokes usually affect only one side of the body?

For the most part, the left side of the brain controls the right side of the body while the right side of the brain controls the left side of the body.

When a blood vessel that carries blood to a given part of the brain is blocked, only the side of the brain where the blood vessel is located is affected. This causes symptoms in the opposite side of the body.



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