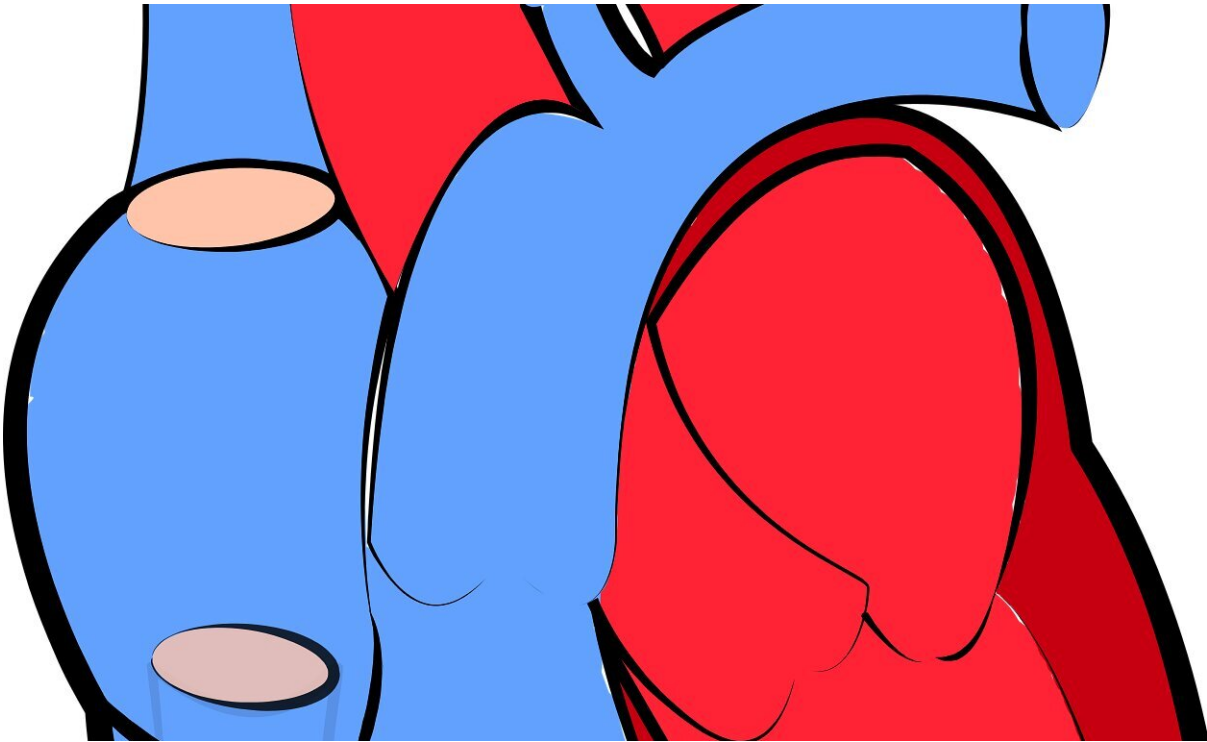


Mayo Clinic Minute: Three things women should know about heart disease

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All women face the threat of heart disease, which is the No. 1 killer of Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mayo Clinic cardiologist Dr. Amy Pollak, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist, says there are many important things women should know about heart disease.

"The first one is to know your [risk factors](#)—you know, if you have a family history of heart disease, stroke or peripheral arterial disease," says Dr. Pollak.

Second, know what your numbers are in terms of cholesterol and [blood pressure](#). And if they're high, take steps to get them under control.

"The last part is to know if you have any risk factors that are something related to another medical condition you have. People who have a history of autoimmune or inflammation conditions, if you've had prior treatment, including radiation or chemotherapy, because all of this factors into your potential risk," says Dr. Pollak.

She also adds that nontraditional risk factors, like problems with [high blood pressure](#) or diabetes during pregnancy, also can make women more likely to develop heart disease.

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