A Woman's Heart Through Every Stage of Life

A guide to protecting your heart from your first period through menopause and beyond

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women.

Your heart story starts in childhood — and choices at every stage matter.

CHRONOLOGICAL AGE

Childhood | Adolescence | Young adulthood | Midlife | Older adulthood

STAGE 0
Years Before Your First Period

Building blocks

Prioritize colorful foods, daily movement and good sleep. Feeling safe and supported during this time is important.

STAGE 1
Your First Years of Periods

Learning your rhythm

Cycles take time to settle. Talk with a healthcare professional about heavy or irregular periods.

STAGE 2
Menstrual Cycling

Cycle patterns matter

Periods and pregnancy complications can be signs of future heart risk. Share your period and pregnancy history with your healthcare professional.

STAGE 3
Perimenopause

A turning point

By 40, talk with your healthcare professional about sleep, mood, blood pressure and cholesterol.

STAGE 4
Postmenopause

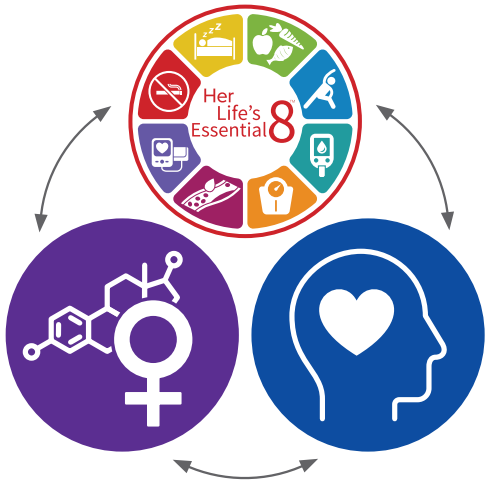
Protecting the years ahead

Know your numbers, stay active and connected, and act fast on warning signs.

5 Things Every Woman Should Know

1. Heart disease is the leading health threat for women.
2. Your periods are part of your heart history for life.
3. Pregnancy can be a heart stress test.
4. Menopause is a time to review your heart risk, symptoms and treatment.
5. Changes in hormones, mental well-being, heart health and brain health are connected.

What Shapes a Woman's Heart Health at Every Age



- **Hormonal health** — Menstrual cycles, pregnancy, menopause
- **Mental well-being** — Stress, sleep, mood, safety, support
- **Cardiovascular health** — Her Life's Essential 8 at every stage

Ask at every healthcare visit: "What's my heart risk, and what should I do about it now?"

Based on the 2026 American Heart Compendium (with American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine). This information is to be used for educational purposes only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice. Talk with your healthcare professional.

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