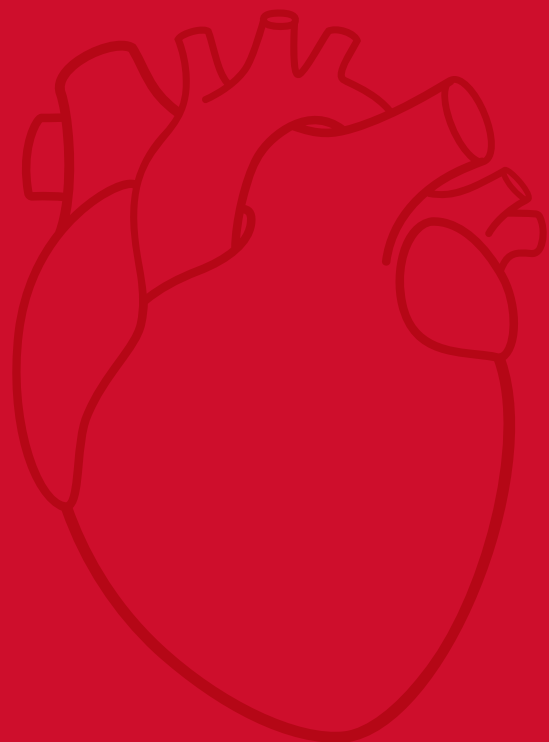


CVS II

WHAT ARE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES?



CHAPTER 1: WHAT ARE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES?

Failure to maintain a good cardiovascular health will result in Cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Cardiovascular disease is a general term that describes a disease of the heart, blood vessels or the organs supplied by these vessels.

Blood flow to the heart, brain or body can be reduced or be blocked because of a:

- blood clot (thrombosis)
- build-up of fatty deposits inside an artery, leading to the hardening and narrowing of the artery(atherosclerosis)

These may give rise to high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney disease, reduced vision or even blindness from retinopathy

PATHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND DISORDERS OF THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

Many conditions can affect the health of the circulatory system, including:

a. Aneurysms: Aneurysms occur when an artery wall weakens and enlarges. The weak spot can bulge as blood moves through the artery. The weak spot may tear, causing a life-threatening rupture. Aneurysms can affect any artery, but aortic aneurysms, abdominal aortic aneurysms and brain aneurysms are the most common.

b. High blood pressure: The arteries work hard to circulate blood throughout the body. When the pressure (force of blood against the blood vessel walls) gets too high, High blood pressure develops. When the arteries become less elastic (stretchy), less blood and oxygen reach organs like the heart. High blood pressure puts one at risk for other cardiovascular diseases like heart attacks and strokes.

c. Plaque deposits: High cholesterol and diabetes can lead to fat and other substances collecting in the blood. These substances form deposits called plaques on artery walls. This condition is atherosclerosis, or narrowed or hardened arteries. Atherosclerosis increases the risk of blood clots and strokes, coronary artery disease, peripheral artery disease (and other artery diseases), heart attacks and kidney disease.

d. Venous disease: Venous diseases tend to affect veins in the lower body. Problems like chronic venous insufficiency and varicose veins occur when blood cannot flow back to the heart and pools in leg veins. Deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a blood clot in the legs, can lead to a life-threatening pulmonary embolism.