

Heart Talk

Heart Health Education

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63 Chapters on Cardiovascular Health

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Medical Glossary

A

Aortic Valve

The valve that controls blood flow from the left ventricle into the aorta, the main artery that carries blood to the body.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#)), [Heart Talk #43](#) ([chapters/chapter43.html](#)).

Apolipoprotein

A protein that binds with lipids (fats) to form lipoproteins, which transport cholesterol and other fats through the bloodstream.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#)).

Arrhythmia

An irregular heartbeat that occurs when the electrical signals that coordinate heartbeats don't work properly.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #46](#) ([chapters/chapter46.html](#)).

Atherosclerosis

A condition where fatty deposits (plaque) build up in the artery walls, narrowing the arteries and restricting blood flow to organs.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #1](#) ([chapters/chapter1.html](#)), [Heart Talk #12](#) ([chapters/chapter12.html](#)), [Heart Talk #16](#) ([chapters/chapter16.html](#)), [Heart Talk #20](#) ([chapters/chapter20.html](#)).

Atrial Fibrillation

An irregular and often rapid heart rhythm that can lead to blood clots in the heart and increase stroke risk.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #46](#) ([chapters/chapter46.html](#)).

B

Blood Pressure

The force of blood pushing against artery walls as the heart pumps blood. Measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg).

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #45](#) ([chapters/chapter45.html](#)), [Heart Talk #48](#) ([chapters/chapter48.html](#)).

BMI (Body Mass Index)

A measure of body fat based on height and weight. Calculated as weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #6](#) ([chapters/chapter6.html](#)), [Heart Talk #10](#) ([chapters/chapter10.html](#)).

C

Calcium Score

A measurement of calcium buildup in coronary arteries using CT scanning, indicating the presence and extent of coronary artery disease.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #1](#) ([chapters/chapter1.html](#)), [Heart Talk #40](#) ([chapters/chapter40.html](#)).

Cholesterol

A waxy, fat-like substance found in all cells of the body. The body needs cholesterol to make hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help digest food.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#)), [Heart Talk #3](#) ([chapters/chapter3.html](#)), [Heart Talk #12](#) ([chapters/chapter12.html](#)), [Heart Talk #13](#) ([chapters/chapter13.html](#)), [Heart Talk #23](#) ([chapters/chapter23.html](#)).

Coronary Artery Disease

A condition in which the major blood vessels that supply the heart with blood, oxygen, and nutrients become damaged or diseased, usually due to plaque buildup.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #1](#) ([chapters/chapter1.html](#)), [Heart Talk #16](#) ([chapters/chapter16.html](#)), [Heart Talk #17](#) ([chapters/chapter17.html](#)), [Heart Talk #40](#) ([chapters/chapter40.html](#)).

CT Scan (Computed Tomography)

An imaging procedure that uses X-rays and computer processing to create detailed pictures of the inside of the body.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #1](#) ([chapters/chapter1.html](#)), [Heart Talk #40](#) ([chapters/chapter40.html](#)).

D

DASH Diet

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension - an eating plan designed to help lower blood pressure through nutrition.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #32](#) ([chapters/chapter32.html](#)), [Heart Talk #48](#) ([chapters/chapter48.html](#)).

Diabetes

A chronic condition that affects how the body processes blood sugar (glucose), leading to elevated blood sugar levels.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #10](#) ([chapters/chapter10.html](#)), [Heart Talk #18](#) ([chapters/chapter18.html](#)), [Heart Talk #50](#) ([chapters/chapter50.html](#)).

Diastolic Pressure

The bottom number in a blood pressure reading, measuring the pressure in arteries when the heart rests between beats.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #45](#) ([chapters/chapter45.html](#)).

E

ECG/EKG (Electrocardiogram)

A test that records the electrical activity of the heart over a period of time using electrodes placed on the skin.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #17](#) ([chapters/chapter17.html](#)), [Heart Talk #46](#) ([chapters/chapter46.html](#)).

Emergency Medical Services

Healthcare services provided in response to medical emergencies, including ambulance transport and immediate medical care.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #28](#) ([chapters/chapter28.html](#)).

H

HDL (High-Density Lipoprotein)

Often called 'good cholesterol' - HDL picks up excess cholesterol in the blood and carries it back to the liver for disposal.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#)), [Heart Talk #3](#) ([chapters/chapter3.html](#)), [Heart Talk #13](#) ([chapters/chapter13.html](#)), [Heart Talk #23](#) ([chapters/chapter23.html](#)).

Heart Attack

A medical emergency that occurs when blood flow to part of the heart is blocked, usually by a blood clot, causing damage to the heart muscle.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #17](#) ([chapters/chapter17.html](#)), [Heart Talk #28](#) ([chapters/chapter28.html](#)).

Heart Murmur

An unusual sound heard during a heartbeat, often caused by turbulent blood flow through the heart valves.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #43](#) ([chapters/chapter43.html](#)).

Hypertension

High blood pressure - a condition in which the force of blood against artery walls is consistently too high.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #45](#) ([chapters/chapter45.html](#)), [Heart Talk #48](#) ([chapters/chapter48.html](#))

I

Insulin Resistance

A condition in which cells don't respond properly to insulin, leading to elevated blood sugar levels and increased diabetes risk.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #10](#) ([chapters/chapter10.html](#)), [Heart Talk #50](#) ([chapters/chapter50.html](#))

Intermittent Fasting

An eating pattern that cycles between periods of fasting and eating, which may have cardiovascular and metabolic benefits.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #8](#) ([chapters/chapter8.html](#))

K

Kidney Function

The ability of the kidneys to filter waste products from the blood and regulate fluid balance, closely linked to heart health.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #18](#) ([chapters/chapter18.html](#))

L

LDL (Low-Density Lipoprotein)

Often called 'bad cholesterol' - LDL carries cholesterol to arteries where it may accumulate as plaque.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#)), [Heart Talk #3](#) ([chapters/chapter3.html](#)), [Heart Talk #12](#) ([chapters/chapter12.html](#)), [Heart Talk #23](#) ([chapters/chapter23.html](#))

Lipoprotein(a)

A type of LDL cholesterol particle that can accelerate atherosclerosis and increase heart disease risk.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#))

M

Metabolic Syndrome

A cluster of conditions including high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess abdominal fat, and abnormal cholesterol levels that increase heart disease risk.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #10](#) ([chapters/chapter10.html](#)), [Heart Talk #51](#) ([chapters/chapter51.html](#)).

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

An imaging technique that uses magnetic fields and radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #40](#) ([chapters/chapter40.html](#)).

Myocardial Infarction

The medical term for a heart attack - death of heart muscle tissue due to lack of blood supply.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #17](#) ([chapters/chapter17.html](#)), [Heart Talk #28](#) ([chapters/chapter28.html](#)).

O

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Essential fats that have anti-inflammatory properties and cardiovascular benefits, found in fish, nuts, and seeds.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #23](#) ([chapters/chapter23.html](#)), [Heart Talk #29](#) ([chapters/chapter29.html](#)).

P

Panic Attack

A sudden episode of intense fear or anxiety that triggers severe physical reactions, sometimes mistaken for heart problems.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #46](#) ([chapters/chapter46.html](#)).

Plaque

A buildup of cholesterol, fat, calcium, and other substances in the artery walls that can restrict blood flow.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #1](#) ([chapters/chapter1.html](#)), [Heart Talk #2](#) ([chapters/chapter2.html](#)), [Heart Talk #12](#) ([chapters/chapter12.html](#)), [Heart Talk #16](#) ([chapters/chapter16.html](#)).

R

Resveratrol

A compound found in red wine, grapes, and berries that may have cardiovascular protective effects.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #21](#) ([chapters/chapter21.html](#)).

S

Saturated Fat

A type of dietary fat that is solid at room temperature and can raise LDL cholesterol levels when consumed in excess.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #23](#) ([chapters/chapter23.html](#)), [Heart Talk #32](#) ([chapters/chapter32.html](#)).

Silent Heart Attack

A heart attack that occurs with minimal or no symptoms, often going unrecognized until discovered later.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #17](#) ([chapters/chapter17.html](#)).

Statin

A class of medications that lower cholesterol levels by blocking an enzyme the liver needs to produce cholesterol.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #3](#) ([chapters/chapter3.html](#)), [Heart Talk #12](#) ([chapters/chapter12.html](#)).

Stress Test

A diagnostic test that measures heart function during physical activity or medication-induced stress.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #40](#) ([chapters/chapter40.html](#)).

Stroke

A medical emergency that occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, causing brain cells to die.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #21](#) ([chapters/chapter21.html](#)), [Heart Talk #48](#) ([chapters/chapter48.html](#)).

Systolic Pressure

The top number in a blood pressure reading, measuring the pressure in arteries when the heart beats.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #45](#) ([chapters/chapter45.html](#)).

T

Triglycerides

A type of fat found in the blood that, when elevated, can increase the risk of heart disease.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #16](#) ([chapters/chapter16.html](#)).

U

Unsaturated Fat

A healthier type of dietary fat that is liquid at room temperature and can help lower LDL cholesterol.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #23](#) ([chapters/chapter23.html](#)), [Heart Talk #32](#) ([chapters/chapter32.html](#)).

V

Ventricular Septal Defect

A hole in the wall between the heart's two lower chambers (ventricles), often present from birth.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #43](#) ([chapters/chapter43.html](#)).

Vertigo

A sensation of spinning or dizziness, which can sometimes be related to cardiovascular issues.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #53](#) ([chapters/chapter53.html](#)).

Visceral Fat

Deep abdominal fat that surrounds internal organs and is strongly linked to cardiovascular disease risk.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #6](#) ([chapters/chapter6.html](#)), [Heart Talk #10](#) ([chapters/chapter10.html](#)).

W

Waist Circumference

A measurement around the abdomen used to assess visceral fat and metabolic disease risk.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #6](#) ([chapters/chapter6.html](#)).

Whole Grains

Grains that contain all parts of the grain kernel and provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals beneficial for heart health.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #50](#) ([chapters/chapter50.html](#)).

Y

Yoga

A mind-body practice combining physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation that may benefit cardiovascular health.

Related chapters: [Heart Talk #26](#) ([chapters/chapter26.html](#)).