

# Heart Disease in Missouri

Heart disease is the number one killer in Missouri. It is the leading cause of death for men and women and for all racial and ethnic groups. In 2006, Missouri spent more than \$1.87 billion annually in hospital costs for heart disease and other circulatory diseases.<sup>1</sup>

## What is heart disease?

Heart disease is a broad term that includes several types of heart conditions. The most common heart condition in the United States and Missouri is coronary heart disease, which can lead to heart attack and other serious heart problems.

## Coronary heart disease and heart attack

Coronary heart disease occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart become hardened and narrowed due to a buildup of plaque. The hardening of the arteries is called atherosclerosis.

The plaque that forms in the arteries is a mixture of fatty substances that include cholesterol and other lipids. The plaque reduces the flow of blood and the oxygen supply to the heart. Coronary heart disease can weaken the heart muscle and lead to heart attack, also called myocardial infarction. A heart attack is an emergency and requires immediate medical attention.

## Other heart conditions

Other types of heart disease and related conditions include:

- **Acute coronary syndrome:** A term sometimes used to describe the condition of a person who has an acute myocardial infarction (a heart attack) or unstable angina (chest pain or discomfort that occurs when the heart muscle is not getting enough blood).
- **Aortic aneurysm:** Occurs when the aorta stretches or dilates and ruptures. A ruptured aneurysm is a medical emergency.
- **Arrhythmias:** An irregular or abnormally fast or slow heart beat. Some are mild while others are very serious and can cause death if they are not treated immediately by an electrical shock to the heart (defibrillation).
- **Cardiomyopathy:** A weakening of the heart muscle or change in the heart muscle structure, often reducing the heart's ability to function normally. This can result from previous heart attacks or viral or bacterial infections.



- **Congenital heart disease:** Malformations of the heart present during pregnancy or at birth. These malformations include holes in the walls that divide the chambers of the heart and abnormal heart valves. This can be caused by genetic factors or adverse exposures during pregnancy.
- **Heart failure:** Occurs when the heart cannot pump enough blood and oxygen to meet the needs of other body organs. Heart failure is a serious condition that requires medical attention.
- **Peripheral arterial disease (PAD):** A hardening of the arteries that supply blood to the arms and legs. It is usually the result of plaque buildup and a narrowing of the arteries. PAD can reduce or totally block blood flow and oxygen to the muscles in the arms and legs.
- **Rheumatic heart disease:** Damage to the heart valves and other parts of the heart due to inflammation and scarring caused by rheumatic fever.

More information about heart disease can be found at:  
- [www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease/)  
- [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm)

*Data Source: 1. Haddix AC, et al. Prevention Effectiveness: A Guide to Decision Analysis and Economic Evaluation (2nd Ed.) Pages 70,71 and 239. Oxford University Press, 2003, New York*



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services  
Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease) and [www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke)

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