

Heart Disease: Prevention Myths

Topic Overview

For a Complete Report

This is an abstract of a report from the National Organization for Rare Disorders, Inc.[®] (NORD). CIGNA members can access the complete report by logging into **myCIGNA.com**. For non-CIGNA members, a copy of the complete report can be obtained for a small fee by visiting the NORD website. The complete report contains additional information including symptoms, causes, affected population, related disorders, standard and investigational treatments (if available), and references from medical literature. For a full-text version of this topic, see *There are lots of things you can do to lower your risk for coronary artery disease*. Good habits, such as eating right, getting regular exercise, and not smoking, all work for most people. But many of the things you may hear about really **don't** work. These include:

- **Hormone therapy.** Doctors used to think that hormone therapy could lower your risk of getting heart disease. But taking estrogen with or without progestin does **not** prevent heart disease. In fact, if you are 10 or more years past menopause, taking hormone therapy may raise your risk for heart disease.¹
- **Low-carbohydrate diets.** These diets could cause serious medical problems, especially if you have heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure. The American Dietetic Association and the American Heart Association do **not** recommend these diets.
- **High-protein diets.** These diets limit healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. And they don't include essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The American Heart Association does **not** recommend high-protein diets.
- **Vitamin B supplements.** Vitamin B and folic acid supplements do **not** lower the risk of heart disease or stroke. Most doctors recommend that you get B vitamins from a balanced diet.
- **Vitamin E supplements.** Vitamin E does **not** lower the risk of a heart attack or stroke. The American Heart Association does **not** recommend taking vitamin E to reduce your risk. Instead, eat a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts.

You can read more about guidelines for heart-healthy eating that include foods that do lower your risk. Or you can follow tips for starting and staying with a hearty-healthy eating plan in:

It's important to talk with your doctor if you aren't sure about your risk for heart disease and the best ways you can lower it.