

## RADIOLOGY INSIGHTS

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# Heart Attack and Prevention

By **LEENA KAMAT, MD**

February is American Heart Month! So we will focus this month's article on heart disease and heart attack prevention.

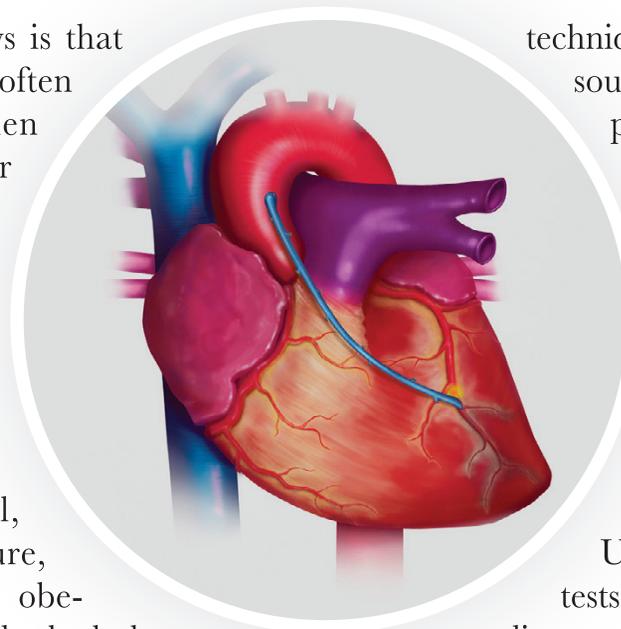
Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. It generally refers to conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain (angina), or stroke. Other heart conditions, which may affect the heart muscle, valves or rhythm, are considered other forms of heart disease.

A heart attack can occur at any age. Heart attack occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or cut off completely. Your heart muscle needs oxygen to survive. This happens because coronary arteries that supply the heart muscle with blood flow can slowly become narrowed from a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances that together are called plaque. This slow process is known as atherosclerosis. When a plaque in a heart artery breaks, a blood clot forms around the plaque. This blood clot can block the blood flow through the heart muscle. When the heart muscle is starved for oxygen and nutrients, it is called ischemia. When damage or death of part of the heart muscle occurs because of ischemia, it is called a heart attack or myocardial infarction (MI). About every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a heart attack!

The good news is that heart disease can often be prevented when we make healthier choices and manage existing health conditions. The major risk factors that can be controlled include tobacco use, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity, diabetes, and alcohol abuse.

A healthy diet is one of the best weapons to fight cardiovascular disease. The food we eat can affect other controllable risk factors: cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes and overweight. It is important to emphasize intake of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and limiting intake of sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages, and red meats. In addition, to maintain a healthy weight, coordinate a healthy diet with physical activity. The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise to improve overall cardiovascular health.

The radiologists from Radiology Specialists of Florida at Florida Hospital are very well trained and experienced. We have radiologists specifically trained in cardiovascular imaging who use imaging



techniques such as x-rays, ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) scans, positron emission tomography (PET) scans, nuclear medicine scans, magnetic resonance angiography, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to diagnose heart and blood vessel (vascular) disease.

Using these diagnostic tests, we can screen for heart disease, determine what is causing patients' symptoms, and monitor the effects of treatment. We keep up to date on the latest technology and information so that we can offer patients the best care.

The Florida Hospital Care Network delivers seamlessly connected healthcare services for all ages. Quality Imaging and Diagnostic starts today.

For more information visit [Some-daystartstoday.com](http://Some-daystartstoday.com)



Leena Kamat, MD, is a board certified diagnostic radiologist, sub-specialized in breast imaging for Radiology Specialists of Florida at Florida Hospital. She earned her medical degree at the University of Florida, College of Medicine and following graduation completed her residency at the University of South Florida and a fellowship in breast imaging at the Moffitt Cancer Center. In her spare time, Dr. Kamat enjoys spending time with her family and friends, travel, fitness, and cooking.