

Learn more about your heart

The heart is a powerful organ. It pumps blood to every part of your body to make sure your cells receive oxygen and nutrients. Your blood also removes waste products from your cells. While that's a good start, there's still a lot to learn about your heart and the medical care you need for it.

Ten interesting facts about the heart

1. The sound of your heartbeat is made by the heart valves opening and closing.
2. Heart attacks are more common during the festive season.
3. Happiness can lower your risk of heart disease.
4. Your heart is about as big as your fist.
5. The heart pumps about 5.7 litres of blood throughout the body.
6. Heart disease has been detected in mummies that are older than 3 000 years.
7. The first pacemakers plugged into a wall.
8. A study showed most heart attacks happen on a Monday.
9. The heart can keep beating outside the body for a short time.
10. A newborn's heart beats faster than an adult's heart.

Tips for dealing with heart disease

If you have a medical condition, like heart disease, you need support. This involves taking the necessary medicine, having cover for medicine or procedures as well as having support from other people like your family and friends.

Here are some tips to deal with heart disease if you have it or you are helping to care for someone with heart disease:

1. You don't need to be perfect all the time

It is normal to feel down after being diagnosed with heart disease or hearing that your loved one has heart disease. Talk to someone about your feelings and concerns, and don't be afraid to accept offers of help from family or friends.

2. Ask for support

If you need help or need to take a break, ask for support. Support can be anything from asking someone to cook a meal or help with medical care.

3. Find out what to expect and follow your treatment plan

Speak to your treating doctor to find out what to expect from your specific heart condition. Depending on what caused the heart disease, you may need help for a short time, or you may need long-term care. The most important thing to do is to follow your treatment plan.

Go for health checks and ask your doctor about heart care

People used to believe you could die of a broken heart, but that's not medically accurate. The problem with heart disease is that the early signs (high blood pressure and high cholesterol) can only be detected with tests. This is why it's important to go for a health check each year.

The best person to talk to about treatment is your treating doctor or heart specialist (cardiologist). They will give you advice about what specifically you need to do take care of your health, take your medicine and change habits if you need to. Engen Medical Benefit Fund offers cover for heart disease if you register on the Chronic Illness Benefit.

Your cover for heart and artery disease

We pay for medicine and treatment if you have a disease of the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy), or heart failure (cardiac failure), hyperlipidaemia (high cholesterol) and hypertension (high blood pressure) and register for the Chronic Illness Benefit. These conditions are all Prescribed Minimum Benefit conditions so once you register, we pay for the treatment, visits to your treating doctor and certain tests without using the funds in your Medical Savings Account.

Depending on your condition, you could qualify to register on the Cardio Care Programme. This programme gives you extra cover for visits to a Premier Plus GP. If your Premier Plus GP registers you on the Cardio Care Programme, we pay for more benefits than if you just register on the Chronic Illness Benefit.