Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of heart disease do I have and how does it affect me?
- What changes can I make to improve my health and reduce risks?
- Are there medications I can take, and how do they work?
- Do I need surgery or other medical procedures? What is involved?
- Are there any new options available to make procedures safer for patients like me?
- What are the risks and benefits of each treatment option available to me?
- Where can I find more information to help me make the best decisions?

Contact Us

If you would like to receive support or need more information, please contact us at:

The Mended Hearts, Inc.
1500 Dawson Road
Albany, GA 31707
1-888-HEART99
www.mendedhearts.org

Living with Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

Living Longer with Heart Disease

Discussion Guide
If you have been recently diagnosed with coronary artery disease (CAD), it's important to learn about CAD, treatment options available to you and ways to help you live with and manage CAD so you can reduce your risks and improve your life.

**What is Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)?**

Your coronary arteries are major blood vessels that carry blood, oxygen and other important nutrients to the heart. CAD happens when those arteries are damaged or diseased. Usually, damage is caused by a substance called plaque that builds up in the arteries and makes them stiff and narrow so the blood with oxygen can't get to the heart easily. Sometimes a piece of plaque will break off leading to a heart attack or stroke.

**Did you know coronary artery disease is the most common type of heart disease in the U.S.?**

**Effects of CAD**

People who have CAD may not know it for many years. Some complications that can happen with CAD are:
- Angina
- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Abnormal heart rhythm

**Treating CAD**

Most people develop some plaque in their arteries, and CAD cannot be reversed, but it can often be treated. People with CAD can lead happy, healthy and active lives. Treatment options will depend on the effects of CAD and the situation for each individual patient. Some options are:

- Medications to lower cholesterol, slow the heart rate, lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, and reduce pain may be given.
- Sometimes surgery or other medical procedures are needed.
  - A coronary artery bypass surgery (CABG) may be needed, especially if you have had a heart attack.

**Sign and Symptoms**

- **Chest pain (angina)**--The pain may be for just a short time and feel like pressure or tightness.
- **Shortness of breath**--You might feel like you can't breathe well or get tired very easily.
- **Heart attack symptoms**--Extreme chest, arm or shoulder pain or pressure sometimes with sweating. Women may have neck or jaw pain, nausea and fatigue.

**I was diagnosed with CAD after a heart attack. I was scared but got a lot of information about what I could do to get better and lower my chance of having another heart attack. Education and support are key. Don't go it alone.**

**I had a stent put in to open up a blocked artery that could have caused serious problems. They used a small pump to keep my blood flowing, and my recovery was very quick. I was feeling better in no time.**

**18.2 million**

The number of people 20 years old and older that have CAD.

- Angioplasty, where the arteries are widened with a small balloon, may be used to help blood flow. A heart stent is often put in at this time.
- A heart stent, which is a small tube, may be put into the artery to hold it open. There is now a small heart pump available for some patients that can keep your blood flow and blood pressure the same during a stent procedure to make it safer.

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