

UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center specializes in meeting women's unique heart-health needs



Each year, heart disease kills more women than men. Some women, particularly those who are relatively young, may be unaware that they have a heart condition. Moreover, a woman's experience of heart disease is unique and very different from a man's. The UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center employs diverse clinical expertise and cutting-edge research in providing the best possible care for women with cardiovascular disease.

Women experience heart disease differently

A woman's symptoms during a heart attack are far more subtle than a man's and may include not only chest, jaw and back discomfort but also anxiety, sleep disturbances, fatigue and body aches. As a consequence, a woman may ignore or fail to recognize the signs that she is having a heart attack. In addition, women often respond differently than men to medications that are used to treat heart attacks and coronary artery disease.

Women are more vulnerable to developing heart-disease risk factors during puberty and pregnancy and more vulnerable to suffering a heart attack or heart disease after menopause. Women who develop gestational hypertension or diabetes have a higher risk of developing heart disease later in life, and they are more likely to die from it. The specialists at the UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center work with obstetricians and gynecologists to provide the best care for women at these vulnerable times.

UCLA Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Health Program

The UCLA Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Health Program is an integral part of the UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center. Our program provides community outreach and education to empower women to pursue better cardiovascular health. Community events include lectures and cooking demonstrations to help women understand the risk of heart disease and achieve a healthier lifestyle.

UCLA physicians and scientists conduct cutting-edge research and are involved in the latest clinical trials aimed at improving cardiovascular diagnosis, treatment, management and care for women with, or at risk for, heart disease.

"Cardiovascular disease is by far the greatest threat to women's lives," explains Karol Watson, MD, PhD, director of the UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center. "We offer a comprehensive program that includes prevention, education, detection, research — all that contributes to reducing risk."

"The Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Health Program enables us to focus on providing educational information and outreach to a number of key groups, including underserved minority communities," adds Dr. Watson.

Coronary microvascular disease

Some heart conditions, including coronary microvascular disease, are more common in women than in men. Coronary microvascular dysfunction affects the small vessels of the heart, producing heart pain and even a heart attack but with disease that may not show up on heart tests. Because standard tests often fail to detect coronary microvascular disease, the diagnosis can be easily missed at centers that do not offer specialized tests. At UCLA, we offer state-of-the-art, non-invasive PET-CT scans to detect problems with blood flow due to microvascular disease.

Stress and heart disease

Research indicates that stress may be a greater risk factor for heart disease in women than it is in men. Stress-induced cardiomyopathy is a type of heart disease that feels just like a heart attack, can look just like a heart attack and can cause heart failure that can be reversible if treated correctly. The specialists at the UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center are experienced at detecting the condition, enabling them to address the underlying causes while avoiding unnecessary treatments and medication for a heart attack.

Holistic healthcare for women

Women with known or suspected heart disease require excellent medical care, but women also require a more holistic approach that includes psychological support, psychosocial support and education to make the kinds of lifestyle changes that will enhance their heart health. The UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center provides access to nutritionists, dietitians, exercise therapists and mental-health counselors to meet the needs of the whole woman. The center connects women with alternative interventions, including meditation and yoga.

Our services

Our specialists offer women a broad array of services to prevent, diagnose, manage and treat all types of known or suspected heart disease, whether congenital or acquired.

These services include:

- Cardiovascular health assessments
- Heart-disease prevention:
 - Nutrition and smoking-cessation counseling
 - Referrals to stress-reduction and exercise programs
- General cardiology
- Cardiac rehabilitation tailored for women
- Cardiac stress testing
- Coronary angiography and percutaneous coronary interventions
- Cardiac imaging
- Heart disease in pregnancy evaluation
- Support groups

Participating Physicians

Karol Watson, MD, PhD

Director, UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center
Professor of Medicine, Cardiology

Tamara Beth Horwich, MD

Co-director, UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center
Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Cardiology

Marcella Anne Calfon Press, MD, PhD

Co-director, UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Center
Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, Cardiology

Jamil Abouhosn, MD

Ravi Dave, MD

Tracy Huynh, MD

Allison Kean, MD

Minisha Kochar, MD

Dorothy Martinez, MD

Lauren Nathan, MD

Barbara Natterson, MD

Reena Patel, MD

Janki Shah, MD

Farheen Shirazi, MD

Preethi Srikanthan, MD

Marmar Vaseghi, MD

Contact Information

UCLA Heart Center
100 UCLA Medical Plaza, Suite 630
Los Angeles, CA 90095

Palos Verdes
501 Deep Valley Drive, Suite 100
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274

Porter Ranch
19950 Rinaldi Street, Suite 300
Porter Ranch, CA 91326

Redondo Beach
514 N. Prospect Avenue
Redondo Beach, CA 92077

Thousand Oaks
100 Moody Court
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

(310) 825-9011 Appointments /referrals

heart.ucla.edu