

## CARDIOLOGY

# The Heart of the Matter

The skilled, compassionate cardiologists at **Intermountain Healthcare** have an important, life-saving message for American women.



It is a shocking statistic: 400,000 American women die of heart disease every year—nearly 10 times the number who die of breast cancer. The reason, in part, can be traced to a simple lack of awareness.

In 2003, a study by the American Heart Association found that only half of women surveyed identified cardiovascular disease as the No. 1 cause of death in women. Cardiologists and women's health specialists across the country hoped that as more and more women recognized and understood their risks, they would embrace the lifestyle changes and seek treatments that could save their lives. But it didn't work out that way.

"Unfortunately, today, far fewer women are aware of their risk," says Dr. Pamela A. Ivey, a cardiologist

with Intermountain Healthcare in Las Vegas. "There are so many things women can do to prevent heart attacks and strokes, but more and more women simply don't think it can happen to them. We hear it over and over again from our patients: 'I thought only men got heart disease.' It is imperative that we reverse this dangerous narrative."

Intermountain Healthcare is a team of nearly 40,000 caregivers who serve the healthcare needs of people throughout Utah, southern Idaho, and southern Nevada. Dr. Stephen J. Portz leads Intermountain Healthcare's renowned cardiology division in Nevada and is working to form a dynamic partnership with the health system's Women's Health Clinic.



Dr. Pamela A. Ivey



Dr. Stephen J. Portz

## New Findings, New Concerns

"Obesity, hypertension, smoking, and lack of exercise have long been known to drastically elevate the risk of cardiovascular disease, particularly in post-menopausal women," says Dr. Portz. "But recent research is also uncovering startling findings for women in their childbearing years. Heart attacks linked to pregnancy are on the rise, often for women in their 30s. Women who experience pre-term deliveries, or develop gestational diabetes or pre-eclampsia, are at a significantly higher risk of developing heart disease later in life."

The Intermountain Healthcare Women's Cardiovascular Center is slated to open later this year and will offer women throughout the Las Vegas area a warm, compassionate place to take the first steps toward heart health.

"The most important thing a woman can do is make an appointment with her doctor, get baseline tests done, and learn her risks for cardiovascular disease," says Dr. Portz. "Let's get the conversation going. We are here to help."

These five steps can help women reduce their risk of heart attack and stroke by as much as 80%:

- ① **Stop smoking.**  
(It's OK to ask for help.)
- ② **Lose weight.**  
(You can do it.)
- ③ **Get cholesterol and blood pressure checked. (Stat.)**
- ④ **Move your body.**  
(Start with walking.)
- ⑤ **Partner with your doctor.**  
(That's why they're there.)

“Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of American women, but, tragically, most women don't know this. At Intermountain Healthcare, we understand that good heart health for women starts with this critical awareness.”

—Dr. Pamela A. Ivey, Cardiologist, Intermountain Healthcare

  
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