

## Could Erectile Dysfunction Mean Heart Disease?

If you think you're exempt from erectile dysfunction (ED), think again. It's not as rare as you might think. The common disorder typically affects 5% to 10% of 40-something men and 40% to 60% of 70-something men, per a new study. Regardless of your age, if you suffer from ED, you're potentially at high risk for coronary artery disease (CAD).

According to the study, ED and CAD could be "differing manifestations of a common underlying vascular pathology."

Mayo Clinic's extensive study—conducted over a ten-year period—reveals the frightening link between ED and CAD: It affects young men, who showed an 80% risk of CAD when ED is present, which is the highest risk group.

"The risk was highest in the youngest men with erectile dysfunction," said the study's lead author, Dr. Jennifer L. St. Sauver, of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

The results contained in "A Population-Based, Longitudinal Study of Erectile Dysfunction and Future Coronary Artery Disease" were derived from an exhaustive study of 1,402 men from January 1, 1996, through December 31, 2005.

Pulling from a wide base, researchers conducted the study using men who were a highly-selected subset of the general population.

According to Dr. Sauver, while previous research existed about the link between ED and CAD, the study participants weren't "followed through time." Therefore, it was mostly predictions. In the Mayo Clinic's research, young men were followed forward to see if they actually developed CAD symptoms due to ED.

**What the results showed.** Sectioned by 10-year age spans—40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70+—each group showed a prevalence of ED. While the lowest group was the 40-49 years old group, ED still showed up in 2% of men. The most affected were (at 39%) men aged 70 years or older.

Per the study, the CAD incidence densities per 1000 person-years showed a dramatic increase in men **with** ED.

### What You Can Do Right Now

#### Step 1: Cholesterol Management

Reducing your "bad" cholesterol can minimize your risk of developing heart problems, such as an attack or stroke.

- Contact your doctor immediately and schedule a screening.
- Watch what foods you eat—choose foods lower in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Live a healthy lifestyle by watching your weight and exercising regularly.

Information from the  
American Heart Association

CAD incidence densities per 1000 person-years		
	Men <b>without</b> ED	Men <b>with</b> ED
<b>Age 40-49</b>	0.9	<b>48.52</b>
<b>Age 50-59</b>	5.09	<b>27.15</b>
<b>Age 60-69</b>	10.72	<b>23.97</b>
<b>Age 70+</b>	23.30	<b>29.63</b>



**Young men with ED had the most dramatic increase and are at the most risk.** The study revealed that men in their 40s with ED may be ideal candidates for cardiovascular risk factor screening and medical intervention.

While many believe ED is simply caused by aging, that isn't the case. Some factors contributing to ED and eventually possible CAD are:

- **Diabetes** - affects the ability to get an erection by damaging blood vessels.
- **High Cholesterol** - "bad" cholesterol fuels atherosclerosis in blood vessels.
- **Obesity** - overweight men have a higher probability of heart disease and ED.
- **Cigarette Smoking** - increases risk of developing atherosclerosis and men who smoke are twice as likely to develop ED.
- **High Blood Pressure** - accelerates process of atherosclerosis.
- **Taking Medication** - medications designed to help your heart can contribute to ED.
- **Anxiety** - worrying about engaging in sexual activity can trigger ED.
- **Depression** - research mounts linking depression with ED and an increased chance of heart problems.

Having one or more of these factors may mean you will develop ED, if you don't have it already. ED in itself isn't life threatening, but it can lead to serious health issues.

The study clearly states that ED is the precursor for other significant manifestations, such as CAD and cerebrovascular disease. Backing it up are two previous studies that revealed a clear link between ED and risk of future cardiac events.

Dr. Sauver recommends those with ED seek medical attention to screen for cardiac risk factors.

**The smartest step you can take.** Proactive intervention with intensive diagnostics can reveal disease markers so you have a head start on turning your health back around.

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### What You Can Do Right Now

**Step 2: Diabetes & Your Heart**  
Having diabetes ups the risk two to four times for developing cardiovascular disease. Some high-risk factors are:

- High blood pressure
- Lipid disorder
- High LDL cholesterol
- High triglycerides
- Low HDL cholesterol
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Low/no physical activity
- Too high blood sugar

*Information from the American Heart Association*

### What You Can Do Right Now

**Step 3: Be Aware of the Common Killer**  
Approximately 33% of adults in the US have high blood pressure and many don't know they have it until it's too late. Perhaps you have had high blood pressure for years and aren't even aware of it. High blood pressure can cause stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure.

Left unchecked, it's a ticking "silent" time bomb. It's vital to have your blood pressure checked, which is the only way to know if you have high blood pressure.

Talk to your doctor about lifestyle changes and have your healthcare team monitor your blood pressure regularly.

*Information from the American Heart Association*

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