



Black Adults Living with Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)



Get the Care You Need

If you've been living with coronary artery disease (CAD) for a while, you probably know that it can cause a heart attack or heart failure. That's especially true if you don't get the treatment you need.

The good news is that you can take steps to advocate for yourself and make sure you're getting the treatment you need to be as healthy as possible.

Advocate for Yourself

Learn about your treatment options. You can manage CAD with lifestyle changes and different types of medicines. Treatment for CAD can also include:

- **Percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI)** — a procedure that uses a stent (a small tube) or balloon to open a blocked artery in your heart
- **Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG)** — a type of open-heart surgery that creates a new path for blood to flow around blocked arteries in your heart

Ask your doctor questions to help make sure you're getting the care you need. For example:

- Why do you recommend my current treatment plan?
- Are there other medicines, diets, or activities that might help me?
- Can you tell me about PCI? Is that an option for me?
- Am I eligible for a clinical trial?



Black adults and CAD

CAD is the leading cause of death for Black adults, and it affects 1 in 19 Black adults in the United States.¹ But Black adults living with CAD are less likely to get appropriate care and treatment than white adults living with CAD. This may be due in part to bias in the healthcare system — like if a doctor assumes that someone can't afford a certain treatment or won't follow a treatment plan.

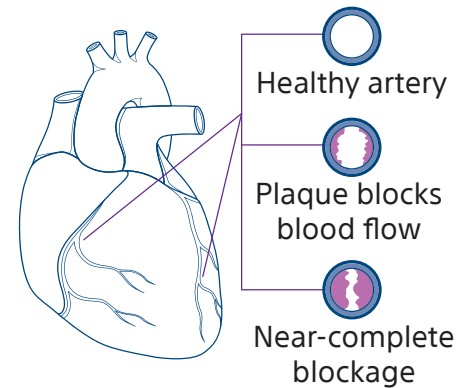
¹ [ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000757](https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000757)

Keep up with your medical appointments. But keep in mind that you have the right to get care from a doctor you trust — someone who listens to your opinions and answers all of your questions.

If you're feeling unsure about your care, ask for a second opinion from another doctor.

Bring a family member or friend with you to your medical appointments. They can offer emotional support, help you ask questions, and take notes.

Ask your doctor to recommend a support group for people with heart conditions. You might find it helpful to talk with other people who are experiencing the same things as you.



CAD happens when plaque (made up of cholesterol and fat) builds up in the arteries that carry blood to your heart. This causes the arteries to narrow and blocks blood from flowing — so less blood gets to your heart muscle.



And remember, a heart attack is **always** a medical emergency. If you think you're having a heart attack, call 911 right away. Read about heart attack symptoms: [cdc.gov/heartdisease/heart_attack.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/heart_attack.htm)