

## ACOG PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE SERIES ON PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE

## Focus on cardiovascular disease

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**C**ardiovascular disease is the leading cause of women's death in the United States, accounting for 1 in every 5 female deaths per year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most risk factors for cardiovascular disease are modifiable. With a disease so prevalent in women's health, obstetricians and gynecologists can assist patients in modifying these risk factors. This, however, is easier said than done.

One of the rate-limiting steps in assisting patients is the process of identifying an individual's risk factors. This can be a time-consuming task in a women's health appointment that is already busy with ObGyn-specific concerns, but technology can assist us.

### Cardiovascular health app considerations

Many smartphone applications and websites are available that can alleviate the time constraints for identifying these individual modifiable risk factors. When evaluating cardiovascular risk factor apps for patients, keep these qualities (as outlined in the ACOG-recommended rubric on page 42) in

mind: design, functionality, usefulness, and accuracy.

The patient-centered resources that assist women in identifying cardiovascular risk factors and that provide tools to positively impact these risk factors through lifestyle changes can help women achieve improved cardiovascular health. Recommendations include 1) manage blood pressure, 2) control cholesterol, 3) reduce blood sugar, 4) get active, 5) eat better, 6) lose weight, and 7) stop smoking.

National organizations' smartphone apps guide the patient through a handful of questions about their current lifestyle, gender, age, and basic laboratory values. Their individual "heart health" results of these questions distribute the 7 risk factors to 3 categories based on the need to focus, improve, or celebrate. Through nonthreatening videos, patients can improve their scores themselves and bring the areas they need to focus, or improve, to their ObGyn's attention for further assistance.

While adding one more task to an already busy practice can seem daunting, there are great technology resources that can be leveraged to successfully address this important health metric. By using the ACOG-recommended rubric and focusing on the app characteristics identified above, you can find one that works best for you and your patients and incorporate it into your practice today. ●

### FAST TRACK

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*Developed in collaboration with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*

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