

# Low levels of the DHEA prohormone predict coronary heart disease

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Men with low levels of DHEA in the blood run an increased risk of developing coronary heart disease events. The Sahlgrenska Academy study has been published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

The term prohormone refers to the precursor of a hormone. DHEA is a prohormone that is produced by the adrenal glands and can be converted to active sex hormones. While the tendency of DHEA levels to fall with age was discovered long ago, the biological role of the prohormone is largely unknown.

Researchers at Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, have now shown that [elderly men](#) with low levels of DHEA in the blood run an increased risk of developing coronary [heart disease](#) events.

## Lower level - greater risk

The study—which monitored 2,614 men age 69-80 in Gothenburg, Uppsala and Malmö for five years—assessed DHEA levels. The findings demonstrated that the lower the DHEA level at the study start, the greater the risk of coronary heart disease events during the five-year follow-up.

"Endogenous production of DHEA appears to be a protective factor against coronary heart disease," says Åsa Tivesten, who coordinated the

study. "High DHEA levels may also be a biomarker of generally good health in elderly [men](#)."

## Clear correlation

According to Professor Claes Ohlsson, "While the study establishes a clear correlation between DHEA in the blood and [coronary heart disease](#), the discovery does not indicate whether or not treatment with DHEA will reduce the risk in individual patients."

**More information:** "Dehydroepiandrosterone and its Sulfate Predict the 5-Year Risk of Coronary Heart Disease Events in Elderly Men" was published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* on October 28. [content.onlinejacc.org/article ... px?articleid=1918789](https://content.onlinejacc.org/article ... px?articleid=1918789)

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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