



## LITTLE FALLS HOSPITAL

*Affiliated with Bassett Healthcare*

### Glossary of Terms (Cardiovascular)

- **Angina:** symptoms that occur when the heart muscle can't get enough oxygen-rich blood. Often appears as pressure, tightness, aching, or pain in the chest, arm, neck, or jaw.
- **Angiogram:** a special x-ray of a blood vessel.
- **Aorta:** the body's largest artery. It carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body.
- **Arrhythmia:** an abnormal heartbeat.
- **Arteriosclerosis:** when artery walls thicken and lose elasticity. Sometimes called "hardening of the arteries."
- **Artery:** a blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the body.
- **Atherosclerosis:** the buildup of plaque within artery walls.
- **Atria (singular: atrium):** the heart's two upper chambers. They receive blood from the lungs and body.
- **Balloon angioplasty:** a procedure that uses a balloon-tipped catheter to open an artery narrowed or blocked by plaque.
- **Blood (serum) cholesterol:** a fatty substance produced by the body and carried in the blood. Can build up within artery walls as plaque.
- **Blood pressure:** a measurement indicating the force of blood as it presses against artery walls while moving through vessels.
- **Blood vessels:** tubes that carry blood throughout the body. Arteries and veins are blood vessels.
- **Bypass:** a new pathway for blood flow.
- **CABG (pronounced "cabbage"):** another term for coronary artery bypass graft surgery.
- **Cardiomyopathy:** weakening of, or structural change in, the heart muscle that reduces the heart's ability to pump.
- **Catheter:** a long, thin, flexible plastic tube.
- **Coronary arteries:** blood vessels that wrap around the heart and supply the heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood.

- **Coronary artery disease:** blocked or narrowed coronary arteries.
- **Diastolic pressure:** the pressure of blood against the inside of artery walls between heartbeats. Appears as the bottom number in a blood pressure measurement.
- **Electrocardiogram:** a test that records the way electrical signals move through the heart. Often called an **ECG** or **EKG**.
- **Heart attack:** an event that occurs when oxygen-rich blood can't get to part of the heart muscle. Can cause permanent damage.
- **Hypertension:** another word for "high blood pressure."
- **Myocardial infarction:** death of heart muscle tissue. Also known as a heart attack.
- **Plaque:** a deposit of fatty material (including cholesterol) within artery walls.
- **Pulmonary artery:** the large artery that carries blood from the heart to the lungs to get oxygen.
- **Stenosis:** the narrowing of an artery, often caused by plaque buildup.
- **Stroke:** a blockage or rupture in a blood vessel that cuts off blood flow to part of the brain. May cause brain damage. Also known as a brain attack or CVA (cerebrovascular accident).
- **Systolic pressure:** the pressure of blood against the inside of artery walls during a heartbeat (when the heart pumps). Appears as the top number in a blood pressure measurement.
- **Ultrasound:** a test that uses sound waves to create images of structures inside the body.
- **Valves:** "doorways" that open and close to let blood move and prevent backflow of blood. There are valves between the heart's chambers.
- **Vein:** a blood vessel that carries blood from the body back to the heart.
- **Ventricles:** the heart's two lower chambers. They pump blood to the body and lungs