

# Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention



Heart disease and stroke are an epidemic in the United States today. Many of the people who are at high risk for heart attack or stroke don't know it. The good news is that many of the major risk factors for these conditions can be prevented and controlled. Talking to your doctor about your heart health and getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked are important first steps to reduce your risk. Many other lifestyle choices—including eating healthy, exercising regularly, and following your doctor's instructions about your medications—can all help protect your heart and brain health.

## Remember Your ABCS

Keep the ABCS in mind every day and especially when you talk to your doctor:

- Appropriate Aspirin Therapy for those who need it
- Blood Pressure Control
- Cholesterol Management
- Smoking Cessation

## Talk to Your Doctor

Share your health history, get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked, and ask if taking an aspirin each day is right for you.

## Control Your Blood Pressure and Cholesterol

High blood pressure is one of the leading causes of heart disease and stroke. One in 3 U.S. adults has high blood pressure, and half of these individuals do not have their condition under control.

Similarly, high cholesterol affects 1 in 3 American adults, and two-thirds of these individuals do not have the condition under control. Half of adults with high cholesterol do not get treatment.

If your blood pressure or cholesterol is high, take steps to lower it. This could include eating a healthier diet, getting more exercise, and following your doctor's instructions about medications you take.

## Eat Healthy for Your Heart

What you eat has a big impact on your heart health. When planning your meals and snacks, try to:

- Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Check the labels on your food and select those with the lowest sodium. Too much sodium can increase your blood pressure.
- Limit foods with high amounts of saturated fat, transfat, and cholesterol. You can find this information on the Nutrition Facts label.
- Cook at home more often. Whenever possible, select foods that are low in sodium or have no salt added. Limit sauces, mixes, and "instant" products, including flavored rice and ready-made pasta.

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## Get Moving

Obesity can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke. To keep your body at a healthy weight and to fight high blood pressure and cholesterol, make physical activity part of your daily routine. Try to fit in 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on most days of the week. For example, you could take a brisk 10-minute walk 3 times a day, 5 days a week.

## Quit Smoking

Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease. If you're a smoker, quit as soon as possible, and if you don't smoke, don't start. You can also support smoke-free policies in your community and try to avoid secondhand smoke.

## Barriers to Effective Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention

Many people with key risk factors for heart disease and stroke—such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol—do not know that they have these conditions, what blood pressure or cholesterol numbers are best for them, or how their high blood pressure or cholesterol could be more effectively controlled. Other barriers include:

- Access to convenient, consistent, and affordable monitoring of blood pressure and cholesterol
- Lack of continuity of care
- Inadequate time with healthcare professionals to ask important questions and receive personalized advice
- Medication expense, side effects, and habits around daily use
- Need for community based strategies for healthier lifestyle choices such as reduced sodium and trans-fat and smoke free air policies

Source: <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/about/hs/prevention.html>

Do you or a loved one have COPD or CHF who struggles with every day activities or needs help managing their disease? **We can help.**

Our COPD and CHF Care Plans focus on the individual needs of the client who is suffering from chronic bronchitis or emphysema which can include: light housekeeping, assistance with ADL's, household management, shopping, meal preparation, proper nutrition, exercise, safety in the home, infection/air quality control maintenance, smoking cessation, medication reminders, pain/stress management techniques.

Let us customize a care plan that fits you or your loved one's needs. Call for a free assessment at **847-548-1330**.

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