

Your heart and diabetes



Take steps to prevent heart disease:

1. Talk to your doctor
2. Get your blood sugar (A1C), blood pressure, and cholesterol tested
3. Get to a healthy weight
4. Get active
5. Take prescribed medication

Why should I care about heart disease?

For people with diabetes, heart disease is the leading cause of death. A major cause of heart disease is high blood sugar, high blood pressure, and cholesterol, which is common in people with diabetes.

Cholesterol can come from the food you eat and is also made by your liver. Your body needs cholesterol, but too much can lead to serious health problems, such as heart attack and stroke.



7 of 10 people with diabetes have high cholesterol.

What should my cholesterol levels and blood pressure be?

Talk with your health care provider about what levels are best for you. Most people with diabetes should aim for these levels:

- **LDL (bad) cholesterol of less than 100 mg/dL**
– LDL cholesterol is bad because it can build up in the walls of your arteries.
- **HDL (good) cholesterol of more than 40 mg/dL for men and more than 50 mg/dL for women**
– HDL cholesterol is good because it helps your body remove cholesterol.
- **Triglycerides of less than 150 mg/dL**
– Triglycerides (a type of fat in the blood) in high amounts can be bad for your health.
- **Blood pressure lower than 130/80 mmHg**



3 of 4 people with diabetes have high blood pressure.

What can I do to help prevent heart disease?

Get to a healthy weight

- Discuss with your health care provider a plan to get you to a healthy weight. This plan may include exercise and diet.
 - Losing weight can help lower your blood sugar, blood pressure, triglycerides, and LDL cholesterol levels.

Get active

- Exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Start off slowly and build up to 30 minutes. Some easy activities to start with are walking, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and parking farther away in the parking lot. Being more active can lower LDL cholesterol and raise HDL cholesterol. It can also help lower your blood pressure and blood sugar. Always talk to your health care provider before beginning any exercise program.

Stop smoking

- Do not smoke.
- If you do smoke, get help for quitting.

Eat healthier

- Look for foods that are low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Eat low-cholesterol, low-fat foods, such as
 - Fish, chicken, and turkey
 - Fat-free or low-fat milk and cheeses
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Whole-grain cereals, breads, rice, and pasta
- Avoid high-cholesterol, high-fat foods, such as
 - Organ meats (for example, liver)
 - Egg yolks
 - Butter and oil
 - Packaged and processed foods
- Limit the alcohol you drink (however, always follow your health care provider's advice)
 - No more than 1 drink a day for women
 - No more than 2 drinks a day for men

Monitor your progress. Reach your goals!

Date Tested	Weight lb	A1C (%)	Blood Pressure mmHg	LDL (Bad) Cholesterol mg/dL	HDL (Good) Cholesterol mg/dL	Total Cholesterol mg/dL	Triglycerides mg/dL

