

Preventing Heart Disease: Other Medical Conditions

If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, you can take steps to lower your risk for heart disease.



Check Cholesterol

Your health care provider should test your blood levels of cholesterol at least once every 5 years. If you have already been diagnosed with high cholesterol or have a family history of the condition, you may have your cholesterol checked more frequently. Talk with your health care team about this simple blood test. If you have high cholesterol, medications and lifestyle changes can help reduce your risk for heart disease.

Control Blood Pressure

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, so be sure to have it checked on a regular basis. Your health care team should measure your blood pressure at least once every 2 years if you have never had high blood pressure or other risk factors for heart disease. If you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, also called hypertension, your health care team will measure your blood pressure more frequently to ensure you have the condition under control. Talk to your health care team about how often you should check your blood pressure. You can check it at a doctor's office, at a pharmacy, or at home.

If you have high blood pressure, your health care team might recommend some changes in your lifestyle or advise you to lower the sodium in your diet; your doctor may also prescribe medication when necessary to help lower your blood pressure. There are many strategies to help monitor and improve blood pressure control and medication adherence[\[PDF-1M\]](#) to improve health outcomes for patients with hypertension.

Manage Diabetes

If your health care provider thinks you have symptoms of diabetes, he or she may recommend that you get tested. If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels[\[PDF-250K\]](#) carefully. Talk with your health care team about treatment options. Your doctor may recommend certain

lifestyle changes to help keep your blood sugar under good control—those actions will help reduce your risk for heart disease.

Take Your Medicine

If you take medication to treat high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something. Never stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Talk with Your Health Care Team

You and your health care team can work together to prevent or treat the medical conditions that lead to heart disease. Discuss your treatment plan regularly, and bring a list of questions to your appointments.

If you've already had a heart attack, your health care team will work with you to prevent another heart attack. Your treatment plan may include medications or surgery and lifestyle changes to reduce your risk. Be sure to take your medications as directed and follow your doctor's instructions.

