

## 5 Manage your cholesterol

Cholesterol is a kind of fat in your blood. There are 2 kinds of cholesterol. The “bad” kind can build up in your blood vessels like junk in a water pipe. “Good” cholesterol helps break down fat in your blood.

- It’s best if your **total** cholesterol is **below 200**.
- Your “**good**” cholesterol (HDL) should be at least **40**. A score of **60** or more is best.
- Your “**bad**” cholesterol (LDL) should be **below 130**. A score of less than 100 is best, especially if you have other risk factors like being too heavy or smoking.
- **Triglycerides** (try-GLIS-ur-eye-dz) are another kind of fat in the blood. This score should be **below 150**.

**Check 1 box:**

My cholesterol levels are great! (Check again in 5 years.)

I need to improve my cholesterol levels.

### What to Do

- Follow the eating tips under “*Lower Your Blood Pressure.*”
- Try to eat at least 25-30 grams of fiber daily. Include soluble fiber from foods like oats, peas, beans, oranges, and apples.
- Use “good” fats, like olive and canola oil, in cooking. Stay away from coconut oil, palm oil, and Crisco®.

## 6 Control your diabetes

Type 2 diabetes (dye-uh-BEE-teez) tends to strike middle-aged people who are overweight. Ask your doctor if you should be checked for it. If you have diabetes, try to manage it.

**Check 1 box:**

I’m not overweight, and I don’t have diabetes. (Skip “What to Do.”)

I have diabetes, or I am overweight.

### What to Do

If you have diabetes, work with your doctor to:

- Eat right.
- Lose extra weight. If you are overweight, see the tips under “*Lose Weight.*”
- Keep your blood-sugar levels under control.

## 7 Manage stress

Everyone has stress. We all react to it in different ways. Drinking, smoking, and eating fatty foods are **not** good ways to cope with stress. They can raise your risk of getting heart disease.

### What to Do

Here are some healthy ways to relieve stress:

- Exercise.
- Laugh.
- Meditate, listen to soft music, or relax another way.

When I feel stressed, I do this:

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Next time I feel stressed, I will try:

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## Are you at risk for a heart attack or a stroke?

A “risk factor” is anything that makes you more likely to get a certain disease. The more risk factors you have for heart disease, the more likely you are to get it.

Some of us are at more risk for heart disease and stroke than others. For example:

- Men 45 years or older
- Women 50 years or older
- People with a family history of heart disease

You can’t change your age, sex, or family history. But you can change some risk factors for heart disease and stroke.



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# Preventing Heart Disease

A QuickRead® Brochure



# Seven ways to prevent heart disease and stroke

*Heart attacks and strokes kill close to a million people in the U.S. every year. The good news is you can do a lot to prevent them.*

## 1 Stop smoking

If you smoke, you're twice as likely to get heart disease. Nonsmokers who are around a lot of cigarette smoke are also at risk. So avoid secondhand smoke.

### Check 1 box:

- I don't smoke! (Skip "What to Do.")
- I need to quit.

### What to Do

- Ask your doctor about ways to help you stop smoking. These include nicotine patches, nicotine gum, inhalers, and medicines. Keep trying until you find the one that works for you!
- Try quit smoking classes and support groups.
- Be patient with yourself. Most people who quit smoking tried several times. The more times you try to quit, the more likely you will succeed!
- Try these things instead of a smoke:
  - Take slow, deep breaths for 2 minutes.
  - Take a walk or do stretching exercises.
  - Call a friend who has quit smoking.
  - Drink a glass of water.
  - Think of the money you're saving.

### To Learn More

- Call 1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUIT NOW).
- Visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).

Today's Date

My date to quit smoking

## 2 Get moving

If you keep moving and stay active, you're much less likely to get heart disease.

### Check 1 box:

- I exercise at least 30 minutes 5 days a week. (Skip "What to Do.")
- I need to be more active.

### What to Do

- Try to get at least 30 minutes of brisk exercise 5 days a week. You can break it up into 10 or 15 minutes at a time, if that's easier for you.
- Your exercise should make you breathe harder than normal, but not get out of breath. You should still be able to talk.
- You don't have to go to a gym. Think of ways to slip exercise into your daily life. For example:
  - Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
  - Shoot basketballs.
  - Do yardwork.
  - Wash the car.
  - Walk the dog.

### Two ways I can fit exercise into my days:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## 3 Lose weight

If you're overweight, you're more likely to get heart disease. This is true even if you **don't** have any other risk factors.

### Check 1 box:

- I feel good about my weight. (Skip "What to Do.")
- I need to lose some weight.

### What to Do

- Figure out how many calories you need each day. Eat 500 calories less than that to lose weight. Calories are listed on food labels.
- Eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Eat less sugar, sodium, and fat, especially saturated and trans fats.
- Get more exercise than you do now.
- Keep a food diary.
- Keep portions smaller than your fist.

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### Activity Level and Recommended Calorie Intake

	Age	Not Active <sup>1</sup>	Somewhat Active <sup>2</sup>	Very Active <sup>3</sup>
<i>Women</i>	19-30	1,800	2,000-2,200	2,400
	31-50	1,800	2,000	2,200
	51+	1,600	1,800	2,000-2,200
<i>Men</i>	19-30	2,400	2,600-2,800	3,000
	31-50	2,200	2,400-2,600	2,800-3,000
	51+	2,000	2,200-2,400	2,400-2,800

1. Not Active — less than 30 minutes of walking every day.

2. Somewhat Active — activity equal to walking briskly (3–4 miles per hour) for at least 30 minutes every day, plus other activities of day-to-day life.

3. Very Active — activity equal to walking briskly for at least 60 minutes every day, plus other activities of day-to-day life.

Sources: American Heart Association; President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition; National Institutes of Health

## 4 Lower your blood pressure

Normal blood pressure is **below 120/80**. Anything higher than that can lead to problems. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to get it checked. You may be able to check it yourself at a local drug store.

Today's Date

/ /

My Blood Pressure

/

My Goal

/

### Check 1 box:

- My blood pressure is great! (Skip "What to Do.")
- I need to make some changes.

### What to Do

- Lose weight if you need to.
- Limit alcohol: *For men, no more than 2 drinks per day. For women, no more than 1 drink per day.*
- Exercise.
- Take blood pressure medicine, if your doctor tells you to.
- Eat more fruits, veggies, and whole grains.
- Eat less salt, red meat, whole milk, and butter. Stay away from trans fats and saturated fats as much as you can.
- Eat lean meats like fish and chicken without the skin. Use skim or low-fat dairy foods.