

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Your Heart—Eating Healthy to Reduce Cholesterol and Diabetes

Heart disease — a condition that affects your heart muscle or blood vessels.

Diabetes: When too much sugar stays in your blood.

Cholesterol: A waxy film that can build up and clog the blood flow in your body.

Arteries: Tubes that bring fresh blood and oxygen to your heart and body.

Did you know?

More Americans die from heart disease than from any other medical condition.¹

The Link Between High Cholesterol, Diabetes, and Heart Disease

Diabetes, high cholesterol, and other heart diseases affect your heart and arteries. If you have diabetes or high cholesterol, you are more likely to have heart disease.

Most High Cholesterol, Diabetes, and Heart Disease Can Be Prevented

There are many things you can do to prevent or manage diabetes and high cholesterol. Start with the **Checklist for Good Health** below.

Checklist for Good Health

See your doctor for a complete check-up. Your doctor can help you measure your risk for having heart disease, diabetes, or high cholesterol.

You can make good choices every day to be healthy.

- Do not smoke.**

- Eat a healthy diet.** Eat foods low in fat, cholesterol, and sodium (salt). Eat lean meats like turkey or chicken. Eat foods that say low-fat or non-fat. If you have diabetes, foods like bread, potatoes, peas, and milk affect your blood sugar the most.

- Exercise.** Do activities you enjoy. Invite family or friends to join you. Just 30 minutes of exercise most days will help:
 - Prevent heart disease.
 - Strengthen your muscles and boost your energy.

- Maintain a healthy weight.** Extra weight increases your heart disease risk.

- Take all medicines the way your doctor tells you to.**



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Look for foods with the American Heart Association symbol. They are low in saturated fat.²

Eat Less to Enjoy Life More

When your body takes in more calories than it uses, you gain weight. Extra weight can lead to diabetes or heart disease. Here are some ways to eat less:

- Take smaller portions. Don't have seconds.
- Use a smaller plate.
- Limit fast foods. Portions are often large and high in calories.

Lower Your Cholesterol

To prevent or lower high cholesterol, you should eat less fat. Here are some ways to eat less fat:

- Bake, broil, boil, poach, or grill meats and fish. Limit fried or breaded meats and fish.
- Remove skin from chicken. Remove fat from beef and pork.
- Cook beans and rice without lard or fatty meats.
- Eat low-fat or fat-free dairy products like milk and cheese.

Manage Your Diabetes

To manage diabetes, you should:

- Keep your blood sugar levels about the same all the time. Talk to your doctor about the best blood sugar levels for you.
- Talk with your doctor or dietician to develop a good diet that works for you.
- Eat meals and snacks at about the same times each day.
- Eat about the same amount of food each day.
- Take your medicines at the same times each day.
- Talk with your doctor to make an exercise plan. Exercise at about the same times each day.

References

1. Rosamund W, Flegal K, Friday G et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2007 Update: A Report from the American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. *Circulation*. 2007;115:e69-e171.
2. American Heart Association. "What Certification Means." Available at: http://www.heartcheckmark.org/print_presenter.jhtml?identifier=4973. Accessed June 5, 2007.

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