

WHAT ARE MY RISK FACTORS?

Do any of these Risk Factors apply to you? Place a check if you answered yes.



Some things you can't change:

- Are you over 45 (men) or 55 (women)?**
Heart disease most often appears in people over these ages, but people in their 20s and 30s can also have coronary heart disease.
- Is there a history of heart disease in your family?**
There is a greater chance of having heart disease if your parents, brothers or sisters had or have heart disease.
- Are you male or a female past menopause?**
Men between the ages of 35 to 55 have six times the risk of heart disease as women in the same age range. But the risk for women equals that of men after menopause.
- Ethnicity: African, South Asian, First Nation.**



The heart disease risks you can change:

- Do you smoke?**
Smoking does all of these bad things to your heart and blood vessels:
 - ♥ increases deposits of cholesterol on the inner walls of arteries, which narrows the arteries
 - ♥ shortens the lifespan of the arteries by as much as 15 years
 - ♥ increases the chance of blood clots

- ♥ causes a 2-6 times greater chance of having a heart attack than non-smokers
- ♥ makes heart attacks more severe
- ♥ causes 3 times the risk of dying suddenly from heart disease than non-smokers
- ♥ increases the heart rate which causes the heart to work harder
- ♥ causes irregular heart beats in some people
- ♥ puts nicotine and carbon monoxide in your lungs. These substances combine with red blood cells and, as a result, the cells can't carry the supply of oxygen that is necessary to nourish the heart and other parts of the body.

Recommendation: Stop smoking. Use counseling, nicotine replacement, and stop smoking programs to help you stop smoking.

Do you have a high level of blood cholesterol & triglycerides?

People who eat a diet high in saturated fats or have an increased amount of cholesterol and triglycerides in their blood have a much greater chance of developing coronary artery disease.

Recommendation: Aim for LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) less than 2.0 mmol/L, HDL cholesterol ("good" cholesterol) above 0.9 mmol/L for men or above 1.1 for women, and triglycerides less than 1.5 mmol/L. Most people will require medications to reach these targets.

Do you have high blood pressure (hypertension)?

High blood pressure makes your heart work harder and increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and heart failure (weakening of the pumping of the heart). $< 140/90$ target $< 130/80$ for diabet patient

Recommendation: Aim for blood pressure $< 130/85$. Target blood pressure will be different if you have high blood pressure or diabetes. Control your weight, be physically active, use alcohol in moderation and restrict salt intake. Medication will be necessary if blood pressure is consistently high.

Do you have diabetes mellitus?

People with diabetes (high levels of sugar in the blood) have an increased risk of heart disease.

Recommendation: Ideal HgA1C < 0.07 . Control blood sugar levels with diet, exercise, and/or medications.

Are you physically inactive?

People who are not physically active, or exercise only occasionally, are more likely to develop heart disease than people who exercise regularly.

Recommendation: Start and maintain an exercise routine a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes exercise 3 or 4 times per week (e.g. walking, jogging, cycling). Also, increase your daily activities (e.g. walking breaks, using stairs, gardening, and household work). Attend a cardiac exercise program.

Are you overweight?

Extra body weight makes your heart work harder and increases the risk of coronary heart disease. The risk is even stronger if the weight is around the waist.

Recommendation: Ideal BMI is 20-25. A BMI > 27 is associated with increased health risks. Losing weight can help control high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high blood sugars. Start a weight loss diet and exercise program.

Alcohol Intake:

Do you drink more than 2 drinks per day?

Recommendation: Limit alcohol use to one to two drinks per day if you already drink. If you don't drink, don't start.

Stress: can affect HR, BP & sleep.

REDUCING YOUR RISK FACTORS



Idea

The more boxes above you checked, the greater your risk of heart disease.

It is important to reduce your risk factors. But be realistic. It's a good idea to change one or two things at a time. If you try to change everything, you may end up feeling frustrated.

Consult your doctor or the community resources listed in this manual for advice about reducing your risk factors