

Make The Link!



# Diabetes Heart Disease and Stroke<sup>SM</sup>

An initiative of the



AMERICAN  
COLLEGE *of*  
CARDIOLOGY

# Public Awareness

## Survey on 2,000 People with Diabetes (Fall 2001)

- Findings:
  - 68% do not consider cardiovascular disease to be complication of diabetes
  - 50%+ don't feel risk for heart condition or stroke
  - 60% don't feel at risk for high blood pressure or cholesterol
  - Awareness lowest among elderly, minorities

# Diabetes-CVD Facts

- More than 65% of all deaths in people with diabetes are caused by cardiovascular disease.
- Heart attacks occur at an earlier age in people with diabetes and often result in premature death.

# Diabetes-CVD Facts

- Up to 60% of adults with diabetes have high blood pressure.
- Nearly all adults with diabetes have one or more cholesterol problems, such as:
  - high triglycerides
  - low HDL (“good”) cholesterol
  - high LDL (“bad”) cholesterol

# The Good News...

- By managing the ABCs of diabetes, people with diabetes can reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke.

**A** stands for **A1C**

**B** stands for **Blood pressure**

**C** stands for **Cholesterol**

# Ask About Your A1C

- A1C measures average blood glucose over the last three months.
- Get your A1C checked at least twice a year.

**A1C Goal = less than 7%**

# Key Steps for Lowering A1C

- Eat the right foods.
- Get daily physical activity.
- Test blood glucose regularly.
- Take medications as prescribed.

# Beware of Your Blood Pressure

- High blood pressure raises your risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems and kidney disease.
- Get your blood pressure checked at every visit.

**Target BP = less than 130/80**

# Key Steps for Lowering Blood Pressure

- Eat more fruits and vegetables!
- Reduce the amount of salt in diet.
- Lose weight.
- Lower alcohol intake.
- Quit smoking.
- Take blood pressure pills.
  - many people require more than one pill

# Check Your Cholesterol

- Several kinds of blood fats:
  - **LDL (“bad”) cholesterol** - can narrow or block blood vessels
  - **HDL (“good”) cholesterol** - helps remove cholesterol deposits
  - **Triglycerides** - can raise your risk for heart attacks/stroke

# ADA Goals for Cholesterol

**Target LDL = less than 100**

**Target HDL = above 40 (men)  
above 50 (women)**

**Target triglycerides = less than 150**

# Key Steps for Controlling Your Cholesterol

- Eat less saturated fat  
Foods high in saturated fat: fatty meats, high-fat dairy products, tropical oils
- Eat foods high in fiber  
Examples: oatmeal, beans, peas, citrus fruits
- Take cholesterol-lowering medication
- Exercise regularly

# Meal Planning

- Work with a dietitian to develop your own, personalized meal plan to help you:
  - Lose weight, if needed.
  - Choose foods low in saturated fat.
  - Count carbohydrates (carbs).

# Exercise

A little bit goes a long way:

- **Try being more active** throughout the day.  
Examples: work in the garden, play with the kids, take the stairs
- **Walk** - work up to at least 30 minutes of walking on most days; you can even split this into a 10-minute walk after each meal.

# Other Strategies

- Get help to quit smoking.
- Talk to your health care provider about taking aspirin and other medications to reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.

# Managing Medications

## On managing your medications:

- Ask when to take each medicine; make sure instructions and labels are clear.
- Link as many medicines as possible to recurring daily events – getting up, eating, brushing teeth, bedtime.
- Put a reminder note where you'll see it.
- Set your watch, computer, or a kitchen timer as a reminder.
- Use a daily or weekly pill box.
- Make a chart showing when each medicine should be taken.
- Talk to your health care provider about what you should do if you miss a dose.

# Key Points Review

- People with diabetes are at a very high risk for heart attack and stroke.
- More than 2 out of 3 of people with diabetes die of heart disease or stroke.
- Diabetes is more than managing blood glucose. It's managing blood glucose and blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Know the ABCs of Diabetes.
- More treatments are available than ever before. Talk to your healthcare provider and learn what you can do to manage your ABCs.

# General Tips

Take steps to lower your risk of D-CVD complications:

- A1C < 7.
- Blood pressure < 130/80.
- Cholesterol (LDL) < 100.
- Cholesterol (HDL) > 40 (men) and > 50 (women).
- Triglycerides < 150.
- Get help to quit smoking.
- Be active.
- Make healthy food choices.
- Talk to your doctor about medication.

# For More Information

Call: 1-800-DIABETES

Visit: [www.diabetes.org/MakeTheLink](http://www.diabetes.org/MakeTheLink)

Email: [MakeTheLink@diabetes.org](mailto:MakeTheLink@diabetes.org)