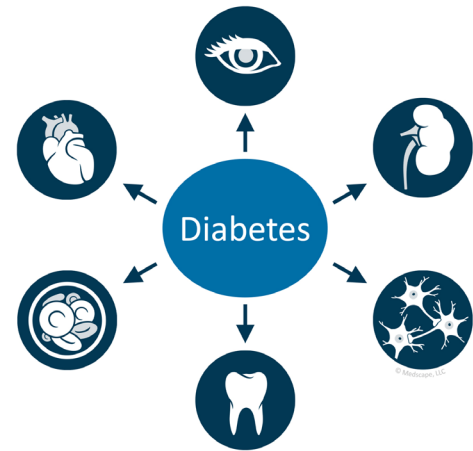


How Is Diabetes Related to Heart Disease?

The Link Between Diabetes and Heart Disease

Diabetes can lead to different problems in the body, including heart disease. When blood sugar levels stay too high for a long time, it can damage the heart's blood vessels, which is one way diabetes can lead to heart disease.

Having heart disease increases the risk for having a heart attack, stroke, and death from heart-related problems. People with diabetes have a higher risk of getting heart disease than people who do not have diabetes. Not only is their risk doubled, but people with diabetes may get heart disease at a younger age than people who do not have diabetes.



Who Is at Risk for Getting Heart Disease?

It is common for people with type 2 diabetes to have risk factors for heart disease, but it's really the combination of risk factors that puts someone at high risk for getting heart disease. Some risk factors like age, race/ethnicity, and family history, cannot be changed. But others that are related to lifestyle or health conditions can be changed.

Knowing Your Risk

- Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider about your risk for heart disease.
- Try using an online heart risk calculator (<http://www.cvriskcalculator.com>) to estimate your risk for heart disease. Print out the results and bring them to your next health visit so you can talk to your doctor or healthcare provider about your treatment plan for managing diabetes and heart disease at the same time.

Risk Factors for Heart Disease That Can Be Changed

Lifestyle Related

- Being very overweight (obese)
- Smoking of any kind
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Having an unhealthy eating pattern (diet)
- Not doing enough physical activity
- Having a lot of stress

Health Conditions

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Peripheral artery disease
- Kidney disease

Making positive changes to manage your risk factors can help reduce the risk of heart disease.

How Can I Lower My Risk?

It is important to manage your diabetes and other risk factors optimally. Making healthy food choices, engaging in physical activity, and practicing heart-healthy habits can help lower your risk for heart disease.

Taking your medicines as prescribed for blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes is also important. You may need more than 1 medicine to help you reach your health goals. There are medicines that can help improve blood sugar levels while making your heart healthier at the same time.



Heart-Healthy Habits

- Be physically active for least 30 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week
- Choose an eating pattern that includes whole grains, fruits, and non-starchy vegetables, and is high in fiber and low in saturated and trans fats
- Avoid foods and drinks with added sugar
- Drink enough water
- Limit drinking of alcohol
- Quit smoking if you smoke
- Manage stress
- Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep nightly
- Practice relaxation techniques