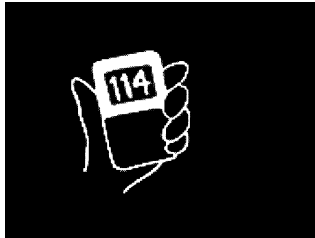


# Diabetes and Your Heart



CARDIOVASCULAR  
RESOURCES  
Mercy Medical Center  
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People with diabetes need to take extra good care of their heart and body. Diabetes increases the risk for heart attack, stroke, and diseases of the blood vessel system (circulation). Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for older people with diabetes.



## WHY DOES DIABETES RAISE THE RISK OF HEART PROBLEMS?

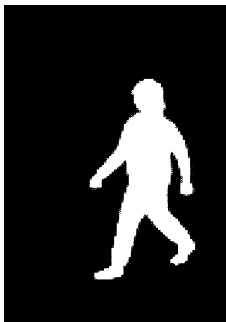
Diabetes changes some substances in the blood. This can make it more likely that lipids, or fats, will stick to the insides of blood vessels, clogging them. When blood vessels become too narrow, not enough blood reaches the heart. The heart and other organs can become damaged. Risk of heart attack and stroke increases.



You are also more likely to have hypertension, or high blood pressure, when you have diabetes. Hypertension can contribute to heart disease. You can have hypertension and not even know it. That's why it's important to have blood pressure checked at least once a year.



You cannot change the fact that you have diabetes, but you can control your diabetes. By doing this, you help to prevent heart disease.



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## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Keep your blood glucose levels under control. You may need to monitor your blood glucose levels several times a day. Remember to take your diabetes medicine on time.
- Do not smoke.
- Eat foods that are low in fat and cholesterol.
- Eat a high-fiber diet of mostly plant foods.
- Choose lean meat or fish.
- Limit salt in your foods.
- Get some physical activity on most days.
- Get to and stay at a healthy weight.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Reduce stress in your life or find ways to deal with stress.

Sometimes, you may still need medication to help your heart.

If you have had cardiovascular disease for a while, surgical procedures may be needed to open blocked blood vessels.

**Take care of your diabetes, and you will be taking care of your heart, too!**