

# Managing Diabetes and Heart Disease

When you have diabetes and cardiovascular disease, you need to keep your blood sugar, or "glucose" in a healthy range to help reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have heart disease than people without diabetes.

In fact, heart disease is the leading cause of death among people with diabetes, but don't fear - you have the power to control your blood glucose!

Diabetes, also known as hyperglycemia, means blood glucose levels are too high. High blood glucose levels can damage the vessels which supply blood to your heart.

If you already have heart disease, it's likely that you have other damage to blood vessels.

Managing your glucose is critical to your health. The arteries are like a road map that take oxygen and blood everywhere, to your brain, legs and down to your feet.

The good news is that the steps you take to manage your diabetes are the same steps that lead to a healthier blood vessel system.

Meet with your diabetes care team to learn all you can about managing your diabetes to keep your blood glucose in a healthy range for you.

They may recommend changes in your food choices, activity level, or medication, to help.

You can make healthy food selections wherever you're eating, if you keep in mind some basic rules.

Some carbohydrates act like sugar in the blood and can raise your blood glucose.

Carbohydrates high in fiber don't raise your blood glucose as fast or as high as carbohydrates low in fiber. So, try replacing low fiber carbohydrates with high fiber carbohydrates.

Foods like whole grains, beans, lentils, fruits and vegetables are good choices.

Activity increases blood glucose metabolism - or how efficiently the body processes glucose. If you can take a walk, increase body motion with aerobic exercise, you will see a real improvement in your glucose levels!

Aerobic exercise includes swimming, biking, walking and dancing.

Many people who have heart disease and diabetes take several medications to reach their goals.

It is very important to take all your medications as prescribed.

The following tips can help:

Organize your medications in a way that reminds you to take them when you should take them.

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Have all of your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. This helps you keep track of your medications and the pharmacist can inform you if any of your medications are harmful when taken with each other.

Make a complete list of the medications you take and share this list with each member of your healthcare team.

By managing your risk, you can lower your chances of having a heart attack or stroke and enjoy an active life.