

The Connection Between Diabetes and Heart Disease

Many people who have diabetes also have heart disease.

In fact, people with diabetes are 2-4 times more likely to die from heart disease.

"I have grown up with diabetes since I was five, so I was always told that it can affect your heart, although I never had any symptoms, no high blood pressure, no chest pain, no shortness of breath. And, then once it happened, they said, "You're more at risk for other ones.""

The good news is that the steps you take to manage your diabetes go a long way to reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Even if you have heart disease, it's never too late to benefit from a healthier lifestyle.

"My first step in managing was to start with the physical aspect that comes with diabetes and I chose that because I like exercising, and I figured I'd probably be able to get a more return on my investment quicker, and it did."

Many people with diabetes also have other cardiovascular risk factors.

Diabetes itself is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

High Blood Pressure – defined as greater than or equal to 140/90.

High Blood Cholesterol.

Overweight or Obesity.

And Inactivity.

All damage blood vessels – which can lead to the formation of plaque on the inside walls of the blood vessels. This process, known as atherosclerosis, reduces the amount of blood that can pass through the blood vessels.

Less blood means less oxygen and nutrients to the organs that these blood vessels keep healthy.

A decrease in blood flow to the heart can cause a heart attack.

A decrease in blood flow to the brain can cause a stroke.

If you have diabetes, you may also already have heart disease. Talk to your healthcare team about all of your risk factors and how they relate, so together, you can create a plan to manage your diabetes and reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

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