

Lifestyle Changes for Managing Diabetes and Heart Disease

To help manage your blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol, you may need to improve your food choices and increase your level of movement and activity. This can also help you lose weight.

Many of the same healthy lifestyle choices go a long way to help you manage both diabetes and heart disease.

Healthy food choices include vegetables, fruits, nuts, lean meats, beans, and fish.

There are a variety of healthy eating patterns you can choose, like the DASH diet, or the Mediterranean diet.

“Well, definitely we always tried to have seafood once a week.”

Work with your healthcare team to consider your food choices, schedule, and culture.

That’s right, you don’t have to give up favorite family meals to eat healthier.

Your diabetes care team can help you find ways to prepare these dishes in healthier ways.

The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.

Start slowly and gradually increase the time you are active. Include activities you enjoy.

Work with your diabetes care team to create an activity plan that you can achieve and build up over time. Your diabetes care team can also make sure you are exercising safely.

“One could be just enhancing their lifestyle activity, seeing are there ways in their actual day as it is right now, without carving out gym time or other specific exercise, that they could get five or six minutes of some kind of movement.”

People with diabetes who are overweight or obese, can lower their risk for heart disease and stroke by developing a weight loss plan with their diabetes care team with a goal of greater than or equal to 5% loss.

Carrying extra weight at your waist can also raise your risk of heart disease.

Even if you are at normal weight and your waist measures over 40 inches for men or more than 35 inches for women, you are at greater risk.

If you smoke, your risk of heart disease is much higher than a non-smoker’s.

One of the healthiest things you can do for your heart and vascular health is to quit.

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Your diabetes care team can help you make a quit smoking plan when you are ready.

Making these healthy choices is a great way to manage your blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol and will go a long way to reducing your risk for heart disease.

Get started and keep at it!

“Exercise, eat the right amount of foods; stay away from a lot of carbs, a lot of sweets...a lot of soda; drink more water; you can do it.”