

Diabetes and Your Heart

People with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, especially women, are at higher risk of developing heart disease, and at an earlier age. Also, people with diabetes have a high rate of “silent” heart attacks, meaning they have no symptoms (such as chest pain) of a heart attack occurring. Therefore, it is important to be screened regularly.

Heart disease is a general term that describes many heart conditions, but coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common. CAD occurs when blood vessels in the heart are blocked or narrowed from atherosclerosis or plaque formation. Diabetes, especially if your blood sugars have been high for some time, can promote this plaque formation even more.

A heart attack, otherwise known as a Myocardial Infarction (MI), is when the heart is unable to receive blood which carries oxygen to the heart muscle. If the blood supply is not restored, then the cells of the heart muscle will die.

A stroke, otherwise known as a Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA), occurs when oxygen carrying blood cannot get to the brain. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells begin to die. If the blood supply is not restored, the affected part of the brain dies, causing disability and/or death.



Do You Have Diabetes? Protect Your Heart... Do Your Part!

Ask your health care provider about the **ABCDEs** to reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke:

- A. A1C** – Glucose control target is usually 7% or less
- B. BP** – Blood pressure control (less than 130/80 mmHg)
- C. Cholesterol** – LDL cholesterol should be less than or equal to 2.0 mmol/L
- D. Drugs** to protect your heart - Blood pressure pills (ACE inhibitors or ARBs), cholesterol lowering pills (statins) and Aspirin (if indicated)
- E. Exercise** – Regular physical activity which includes healthy diet, achievement and maintenance of healthy body weight
- S. Smoking Cessation**