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Your Heart Risk Action Plan

To reduce your risk of a future heart attack, make lifestyle changes and get treatment for these risk factors. Think about joining a cardiac rehab (rehabilitation) program. Cardiac rehab is a medically supervised program. It's designed by your healthcare team to meet your unique needs. It will help you recover from your heart problem. And it will reduce your risk of future heart problems. A cardiac rehab program teaches you how to manage risk factors. And also how to make key lifestyle changes.

Smoking

- Set a quit date in the next month.
- Ask your healthcare provider for help with quitting smoking.
- Stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.

High cholesterol



- Take cholesterol medicines as directed.
- Choose heart-healthy foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Your healthcare provider may advise you to do moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Do this for at least 40 minutes each day, for at least 3 to 4 days per week.
- If you are overweight or obese, your provider will work with you to lose weight and lower your body mass index (BMI) to a normal or near-normal level.
- Quit smoking.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.

High blood pressure

- Take blood pressure medicines as directed.

- Reduce your salt (sodium) intake to 1,500 milligrams (mg) per day, or as directed. (One teaspoon of table salt is about 2,300 mg sodium.) Ask your healthcare provider about the DASH diet. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It's a balanced eating program that has been shown to lower blood pressure.
- Your healthcare provider may advise you to do moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Do this for at least 40 minutes each day, for at least 3 to 4 days per week.
- If you are overweight or obese, your provider will work with you to lose weight and lower your BMI to a normal or near-normal level.
- Quit smoking.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.

Being overweight

- Your healthcare provider will give you information on dietary changes that you may need to make, based on your case. Your provider may advise that you see a registered dietitian for help with diet changes.
- Your healthcare provider may advise you to do moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Do this for at least 40 minutes each day, for at least 3 to 4 days per week.
- Use a log to track your eating and activity habits.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.

Diabetes

- Take diabetes medicines or insulin as instructed.
- Test blood sugar as directed.
- Your healthcare provider may advise you to do moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Do this for at least 40 minutes each day, for at least 3 to 4 days per week.
- If you are overweight or obese, your provider will work with you to lose weight and lower your BMI to a normal or near-normal level.
- Take a diabetes education class.

Stress, anger, and depression

- Stay in touch with family and friends.
- Think about starting counseling or joining a support group.
- Your healthcare provider may advise you to do moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Do this for at least 40 minutes each day for at least 3 to 4 days per week.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.

Lack of exercise

- Work with a healthcare provider to create an exercise program.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.
- Your healthcare provider may advise you to do moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Do this for at least 40 minutes each day, for at least 3 to 4 days per week.

How to make changes

- Encourage family members and friends to make changes with you. This supports you. And it benefits them, as well.
- Don't try too much too soon. Get comfortable with one change before tackling another.
- If you're discouraged, focus on how good you'll feel once you've made a change.
- Reward yourself when you've made a change. Treat yourself to a meal at your favorite restaurant. Or buy that new book or pair of shoes you wanted.
- Join a cardiac rehab program.

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