

# Questions to Ask Your Doctor

## Visit Your Doctor Regularly

Being honest about your risk factors will get you the most realistic assessment and help your doctor develop a plan to lower your overall risk. Nothing replaces a discussion with your doctor or health care provider. Talk to your doctor about your risk factors. Choose two to three questions most relevant to you and write down the answers.

### Here are some questions you can ask your doctor:

- Do I have heart disease?
- What tests should I have, and how often, to monitor my risk factors for developing heart disease and stroke?
- What do my test results mean?
- Are my blood pressure numbers within a normal range?
- Are my cholesterol numbers within a normal range?
- What sort of plan do you recommend for me to lower my risk?
- Can you help me plan a safe weight loss and exercise program?
- What are the possible side effects of the medications I've been prescribed?

### Specific questions for women to ask a doctor:

It is important to know how heart disease manifests itself in women. These questions are provided to encourage a meaningful dialogue between you and your healthcare provider regarding heart disease.

- What is the difference between heart disease, heart attack and heart failure?
- What are my risk factors for heart disease?
- What are the warning signs or symptoms of heart disease?
- How do warning signs differ for men and women?
- How will menopause affect my heart?
- How does smoking affect my heart?
- Do I need to lose or gain weight for my health?
- What kind of physical exercise is right for me?
- What is a healthful eating plan for me?
- What is the difference between good and bad cholesterol and what should my levels be?
- Based on my history and risk factors what can I do to lower my risk of heart disease?
- What kinds of tests are used to diagnose heart disease?
- Which ones are most appropriate for women?

**Young athletes who answer “yes” to any of the questions below should see a heart doctor:**

**Patient history:**

- I’ve passed out when startled, during exercise, or when feeling an emotion.
- I’ve fainted or passed out after exercise.
- I’ve had extreme fatigue associated with exercise.
- I’ve had unusual or extreme shortness of breath during exercise.
- I’ve had discomfort, pain or pressure in my chest during exercise.
- I’ve been diagnosed with an unexplained seizure disorder.

**Family history:**

- There has been an unexpected or unexplained death (includes SIDS, car accident, drowning, others) before age 50 in my family.
- Someone in my family died of a heart problem before age 50.
- Someone in my family has unexplained fainting or seizures.