



## ARE YOU AT RISK?

### QUIKRISK™ SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

This test can help you determine whether heart disease could be a problem for you. Circle the appropriate response next to each true statement and add up your total.

	Yes	No	
I smoke.	10	0	
I have high cholesterol: My total level measures 240 or higher; or my LDL measures 160 or higher.	10	0	
My blood pressure often exceeds 120/80.	10	0	
I weigh more than 20 percent above my ideal weight.	10	0	
I have diabetes.	10	0	
I am sedentary (accumulating less than 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise or physical activity).	10	0	
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
I exceed moderate amounts of alcohol (more than 2 drinks per day for men; more than 1 per day for women).	10	5	0
I often eat foods high in saturated fat.	10	5	0
I often eat foods high in sodium (salt).	10	5	0
I tend to feel stressed.	10	5	0

### HOW DID YOU DO?

If you scored 0-20 points, you're probably at low to medium risk for heart disease.

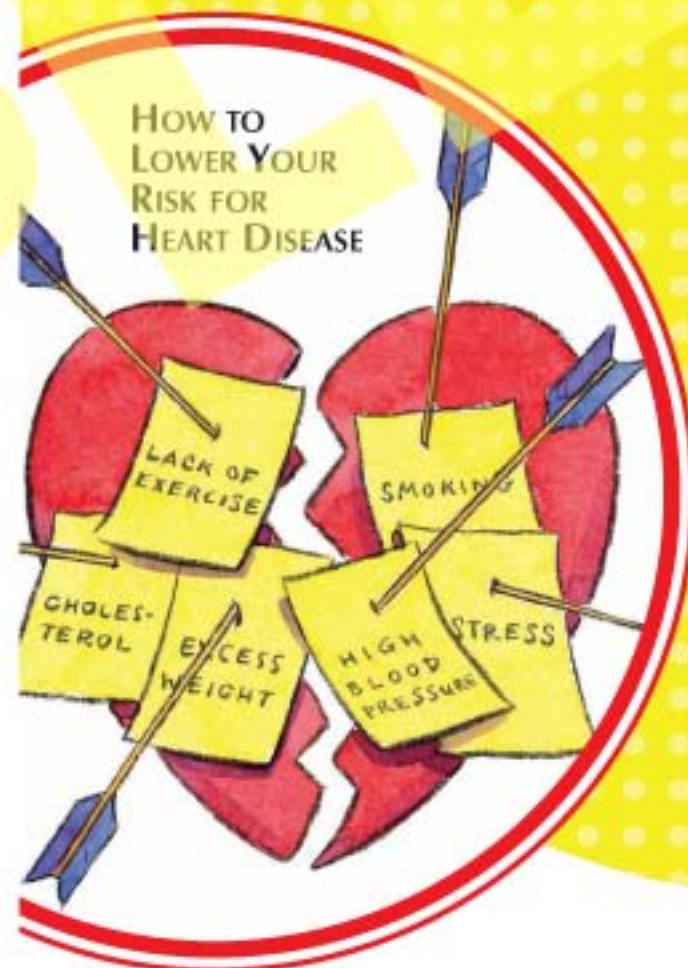
If your total was 20-50, you may be at higher risk for heart disease and should speak with a health care provider during your next visit.

If you scored 50-100 points, you could be at very high risk for heart disease and should speak with your provider without delay.

## Practical Heart Helpers

- **Raise the right cholesterol.** Unlike total and LDL cholesterol levels, the higher your HDL cholesterol level, the better — 60 or higher is optimal; less than 40 is too low. **Tip:** Exercise can raise HDL and lower unhealthy LDL levels.
- **Live tobacco-free.** Smoking cigarettes and chewing tobacco contribute to elevated blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol levels. **Tip:** Cessation medications, nicotine replacement therapy and psychotherapy have all been shown to help even heavy tobacco users quit.
- **Get your heart pumping.** Aerobic exercise strengthens your cardiovascular system by improving your body's ability to use oxygen. Find activities you enjoy — dancing, walking, cycling, swimming — and that you can do regularly. If you're unaccustomed to exercise, first get your health care provider's approval. 
- **Keep tabs on blood pressure.** High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease that usually has no symptoms. **Tip:** Experts recommend a blood pressure check at least every 2 years, or more often, based on your provider's advice, if your blood pressure is above normal.
- **Lose weight, lose multiple risks.** Overweight and obese folks carry a triple risk: high blood pressure, high blood sugar and high cholesterol — one or all can lead to coronary heart disease. **Tip:** Slimming down even a little can reverse the risk.
- **Learn to let go.** When you're mentally stressed, your body becomes stressed. **Tip:** Relaxation techniques, such as meditation and imagery, can reduce blood pressure and muscle tension and increase blood flow to major muscles.
- **Partner with your doctor.** Get regular checkups and screenings, especially if you are being treated for risk factors. Good medical care can help ensure that your heart keeps pumping vigorously for many years to come.

# THE BIG 6 HEART BREAKERS



## BEYOND CHOLESTEROL

Ask the average person to name the risk factors for heart disease and most will answer high cholesterol. Although it gets a lot of attention, cholesterol is not the only enemy. Several factors contribute to heart disease, which can put you at risk for heart attack and stroke.

Fortunately, at least **six** of the major factors for heart disease are within your control. You can significantly lower the odds that you'll have a heart attack if you "fix" the "Big 6."

- Smoking
- Abnormal cholesterol
- Lack of exercise
- High blood pressure
- Excess weight
- Unmanaged stress

## Are You Headed for Heartbreak?

Take the test on the facing panel. It's a good first step in determining your risk for heart disease and heart attack. Once you know your risk factors for heart disease, the next step is making changes in your lifestyle that can reverse those risks. This brochure will help you get started.

### Signs of Heart Attack:

Call 911... if symptoms persist for more than 2 minutes.

- Squeezing, pressure and/or burning across the chest, deep beneath the breastbone. (Heart attack without chest pain occurs about a third of the time, especially in women and diabetics.)
- Upper abdominal discomfort — heartburn, nausea or severe indigestion.
- Dizziness, shortness of breath, sweating or unusual fatigue.
- Sensation radiating from the center of the chest into the jaw, neck, arm, shoulder or back.



## 6-Point Strategy



### Keep a Healthy Blood Pressure

Maintain a healthy weight, quit smoking, exercise and lower your salt intake. Take your medication, if prescribed, and monitor your blood pressure regularly.

### Quit Smoking

Nicotine increases heart rate and blood pressure, adding significant stress to your heart and blood vessels. Quitting smoking can reduce your risk of developing coronary artery disease by 50 to 70 percent within five years of quitting.



### About High Blood Pressure

Perhaps the most common risk factor for heart disease is high blood pressure (hypertension). High blood pressure makes the heart work harder and, if left untreated, may lead to stroke or heart attack. Risk factors include:

- Age
- Smoking
- Inactivity
- Heredity
- Obesity

Have your blood pressure checked regularly — aim to keep your average readings below 120/80, a level considered pre-hypertensive.



### Control Cholesterol

High total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol and triglycerides (another fat circulating in the blood) promote the buildup of plaque on artery walls, reducing blood flow. **Note:** A high level of HDL (good) cholesterol is good for the heart.

A high triglyceride level is often accompanied by other factors (such as low HDL or a tendency toward diabetes) that raise heart disease risk. It's important to become familiar with your individual cholesterol profile. If it's within unhealthy ranges, your health care provider may recommend a combination of diet and exercise, and possibly medication.



### Keep Exercising

Give your heart at least 30 minutes of accumulated moderate exercise every day. If you're unaccustomed to exercise, consult your health care provider first.

## Another Troublemaker: Diabetes

Diabetes (which most often is type 2) is a risk factor for heart disease because it's usually accompanied by other heart disease risk factors, such as high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol levels.

Did you know that more than 65 percent of people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke? That's why it's so important to manage your diabetes daily if you have been diagnosed with the disease.

Prevention should be your first goal. How? Lose excess weight and get physically active with your provider's OK.

**Weight loss tip:** You can lose about 1 pound per week if you cut 500 calories a day through eating less or exercising (preferably both).



### Lose Excess Weight

Being overweight leads to the major heart disease risks: high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and high blood sugar (diabetes). If you are more than 20 percent over your ideal weight, ask your health care provider to help design a diet and exercise plan for slimming down.



### Manage Stress

Long-term stress can result in physiological changes such as elevated blood pressure and cholesterol levels and the production of certain hormones that might hurt your heart. According to some studies, heart disease and premature death are also more likely in people who tend to feel chronic anxiety, hostility and anger, or who suppress these feelings. Learn to manage your stress. Your heart will thank you for it.