



## Patient Information

# Determining Your Cardiometabolic Health

Cardiometabolic health is a measure of your risk for diabetes and heart disease. It is determined by a set of conditions that include weight, blood glucose levels and cholesterol. This handout provides information from the American Diabetes Association's CheckUp America program.

### Weight

Since being overweight has such a negative effect on your health, losing even a little weight can improve your health. Losing just 5% to 10% of your body weight can help prevent diabetes.

To cut back on calories, eat smaller servings of fattening foods; split a main dish with someone when you eat out, or take some food home for the next day; start every meal with a fruit or vegetable; and cook in low-fat ways such as roasting, grilling or steaming.

### Blood Glucose Levels

High levels of glucose (sugar) in your blood could indicate problems, including prediabetes and diabetes. Ask your NP about a blood glucose test. The American Diabetes Association recommends having your blood glucose checked at least every 3 years starting at age 50. If you are overweight or have other risk factors, you may want to be checked earlier or more often.

### Cholesterol Levels

Cholesterol is a fatty substance in the body's cells and blood. There are two types: Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol can lead to a buildup of cholesterol in your arteries. A higher LDL level increases your risk of heart disease. High-density lipoproteins (HDL) or "good" cholesterol help remove cholesterol from your body. A higher HDL level means a lower chance of heart disease.

### Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood flow in your blood vessels. When your NP checks your blood pressure, you'll get two numbers, such as 120/80. The first number is the pressure as your heart beats and pushes blood through blood vessels. The second number is the pressure when the blood vessels relax between heartbeats.

You have high blood pressure if your blood moves through the

blood vessels with too much force. If your blood pressure is higher than 120/80, you're at greater risk for heart disease and diabetes.

### Physical Activity

Exercise offers many benefits. For example, exercise can improve blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol; lower the risk of diabetes, heart disease and stroke; help relieve stress, increase energy and improve sleep; strengthen the heart, muscles and bones; and keep the body and joints flexible.

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity — anything that increases your heart rate and causes you to break a sweat — on most days.

### Smoking

If you are a smoker, quit. Smoking can harm blood vessels, which raises the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Smoking also damages blood vessels in your feet and legs.

To prepare to quit smoking, think of your own reasons to stop and write them down every day. Tell others you'll need their help and understanding. Throw away all cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays. Ask a friend to quit with you.

### Family History

Although you can't change your genes, you can reduce your health risks by knowing which conditions run in your family, such as diabetes and heart disease. Be sure to share this information with your NP.

### Making Changes

Go slowly when making lifestyle changes. Be sure you are ready, willing and able to change, and then decide what you will change. Think about your current eating and exercise habits, and make some changes that are easy to start, such as eating fruit instead of ice cream for a snack.

Set specific goals, and keep them realistic. When the time period you set expires, ask yourself if you succeeded. If you reached your goals, begin practicing these habits faithfully. And if you weren't successful, simply try again. Update your goals, or choose easier ones that you can build on. ❖

Information adapted from CheckUp America. For more information call 1-800-DIABETES (342-2383), email [AskADA@diabetes.org](mailto:AskADA@diabetes.org), or visit [www.CheckUpAmerica.org](http://www.CheckUpAmerica.org). For more information on how often you should be checked for these risk factors, download the CheckUp Chart at [www.CheckUpAmerica.org](http://www.CheckUpAmerica.org).

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### Additional Notes:

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