

Cardiovascular health

Keep your heart healthy

Your heart can send a drop of blood from your head to your toes and back again in about one minute.

You can do many things to make sure it doesn't run into roadblocks. Talk to your doctor about your risk for heart disease and about having regular checks on your cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

Are you at risk for heart disease?

Many things can put you at increased risk for heart disease. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of developing heart disease.

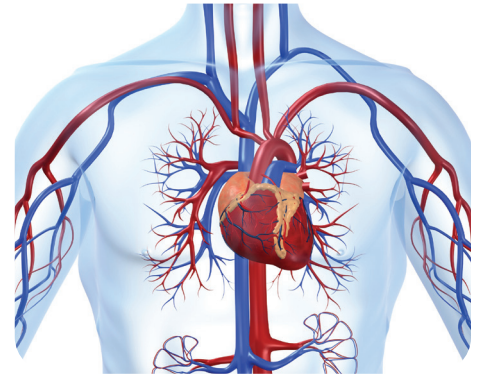
Some risk factors can't be changed or controlled, like age, gender, race or family history of heart problems. You can work on other risk factors with your doctor by:

- Controlling diabetes
- Controlling high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels
- Exercising more and eating a heart-healthy diet
- Losing weight
- Managing stress
- Stopping smoking

Understanding cholesterol

Blood cholesterol, a fatty substance in your blood, is either high-density lipids (HDL), called "good cholesterol," or low-density lipids (LDL), called "bad cholesterol." A high LDL level can cause plaque to build up inside blood vessels. This narrows the opening for blood and may also encourage blood clots.

If your LDL level is high, talk to your doctor about what your goal should be. Ask for ideas about different ways you can reach your goal – including diet, exercise and medicine. Then, take charge of getting your numbers down.



Ask your doctor
about your
cardiovascular health

Continued on next page →

Humana[®]

Humana.com



Blood pressure is important, too!



Four ways to lower blood pressure:

1. Avoid alcohol and tobacco
2. Eat less salt
3. Lose weight
4. Get regular exercise

Your blood pressure measures two basic parts of your heartbeat:

- **The systole** (pronounced SIS-toe-lee), when the heart muscle squeezes to pump blood out
- **The diastole** (pronounced die AS-toe-lee), when the heart muscle relaxes to let blood in

When your heart relaxes, it fills up with blood. When it contracts, it pumps that blood out into the thousands of miles of blood vessels in your body.

Your heart needs to relax fully and contract fully to get nutrients and oxygen to all parts of your body.

With all that work to do, you can see why both numbers of your blood pressure are important. According to the National Institutes of Health, a normal blood pressure reading is 119/79. Even a slight reduction in blood pressure can help you avoid some conditions, like kidney disease.

Follow these important tips:

- Talk to your doctor about your cholesterol and blood pressure
- Keep records of your results, and share them with all your doctors
- Visit your doctor at least once a year as part of your plan to catch and treat medical problems as early as possible
- Talk about how medicines, including aspirin, can help you reduce your risk for heart disease
- Ask about a heart-healthy diet, increasing your physical activity, weight loss or maintenance and resources to stop smoking

Sources: National Library of Medicine
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/highbloodpressure.html

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/hearttruth/lower-risk/risk-factors.htm

Humana is a Medicare Advantage HMO, PPO, and PFFS organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in any Humana Medicare plan depends on plan renewal.

This publication offers general health-related information and is not a substitute for professional healthcare. For individualized medical guidance, talk to your doctor.

Humana[®]

Humana.com 