

LOWERING YOUR RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

An expert panel for the American Heart Association helped develop these guidelines for preventing cardiovascular disease in women. The guidelines apply to all types of cardiovascular disease, including coronary heart disease.

Always consult your physician before making any significant changes to your diet or starting an exercise program. People with diabetes should have a detailed medical evaluation with appropriate diagnostic studies before starting an exercise program.

RISK FACTOR	MANAGEMENT GOALS	RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS
Blood pressure	Optimal goal is less than 120/80 mm Hg Minimum goal for people with diabetes is less than 130/80 mm Hg	Following a heart-healthy diet and getting regular physical activity are the first steps. Drug therapy should be added if blood pressure is greater than or equal to 140/90 mm Hg. If it is between 130–139/80–89 mm Hg in women with diabetes, drug therapy should be considered if after a maximum of three months, lifestyle approaches alone do not bring it to goal.
Cigarette smoking	Smoking cessation	Interventions may include one-on-one counseling, nicotine replacement products, and group support.
Diabetes	Glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA _{1c}) level less than 7%	Lifestyle and drug therapy should be used to achieve and maintain an HbA _{1c} level of less than 7%.
Diet	Limit saturated fat to less than 7% of calories. Limit dietary cholesterol to less than 200 milligrams per day. Limit intake of trans fatty acids.	An overall healthy eating pattern that includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fish, legumes, and sources of protein low in saturated fat. Because of the complexity of nutrition issues, consultation with a registered dietitian is recommended.
Lipids	LDL cholesterol less than 100 mg/dl (or less than 70 mg/dl if assessed by a physician as very high risk) HDL cholesterol greater than or equal to 50 mg/dl Triglycerides less than 150 mg/dl Non-HDL cholesterol less than 130 mg/dl*	Following a heart-healthy diet and getting regular physical activity are the first steps. Drug therapy in addition to lifestyle recommendations is recommended for high-risk women with LDL cholesterol greater than or equal to 100 mg/dl or an HDL cholesterol less than 50 mg/dl or a non-HDL cholesterol greater than or equal to 130 mg/dl.
Physical activity	Optimal goal is a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking) on most, preferably all, days of the week.	A regular physical activity program, individualized according to ability, is recommended for all persons with diabetes who are capable of performing physical activity.
Psychosocial factors	Emotional and psychological well-being and the ability to integrate diabetes care into one's life	You and your health-care providers should regularly discuss your mood, stress level, resources (including emotional and financial resources), and feelings about having diabetes.
Weight management	Body-mass index between 18.5 and 24.9 Waist circumference less than 35 inches	An appropriate balance of physical activity and caloric intake, as well as formal behavior programs when indicated, are recommended.

* Non-HDL cholesterol is calculated by subtracting HDL cholesterol from total cholesterol.