

Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Stroke

Diabetes can be managed effectively when diagnosed early. But if left untreated for longer periods of time, then it causes damage to major body organs such as the kidney and heart resulting in an increased risk of developing heart disease and related complications.

What is the link between diabetes, heart disease, and stroke?

Most type 2 diabetes patients also have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

High Blood pressure: Since type 2 diabetes results from insulin resistance, the body will have more glucose than it can use. Over time, the high blood glucose damages the nerves and blood vessels causing them to be stiff. This in turn makes the heart have to work harder to pump blood to the body organs. The damaged vessels may leak blood, clot, and puts a strain on the heart increasing the risk of stroke and heart attack.

Cholesterol: High levels of LDL cholesterol which result from being inactive, unhealthy eating habits, and smoking lead to blockage of the blood vessels. This will reduce the flow to blood into the heart resulting to shortness of breath, chest pains and even heart attack.

The longer a person lives with diabetes, the higher chances of developing heart disease. Persons 65 and up have a higher risk of succumbing to these conditions. The good news is that any steps taken towards managing diabetes helps in lowering the chances of suffering stroke and heart disease.

How can you lower the risk of stroke, heart attack and related conditions?

1. If you are overweight, try having a healthy meal plan with a reduced caloric intake. This will blood glucose levels lower and even result in weight loss.
2. Quit smoking. Whether or not one is diabetic, smoking increases the chances of having heart problems. It's especially important to stop smoking if you are diabetic, since both smoking and diabetes narrow the blood vessels. Smoking may be hard to stop so we encourage you to seek help and support in your area.
3. Exercise regularly to ensure all the body organs are functioning properly. Exercise also helps in cutting unwanted fat thus reducing LDL cholesterol.
4. Seek medical advice. Your doctor will prescribe medication to manage your diabetes. Always ask for other options to keep your heart healthy.

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