



**Changing your lifestyle to include eating a well-balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your chances of developing heart disease.**

**Heart Disease. You're in control to decrease your risk and manage your heart health.**

#### **You Can Change Some Heart Disease Risks**

Lifestyle choices, genetics and other health conditions all add to your risk of heart disease. Some risks can be changed:

- **Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol levels and blood sugar levels under control with diet and exercise.** You should talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. Your doctor can also give you medicine if diet and exercise don't work.
- **Maintain a healthy weight** by eating a heart healthy diet and exercising. Exercising most days of the week for 30 minutes each time is all it takes to get the benefits of physical activity.

#### **Some Women Have an Increased Risk for Heart Disease**

African American women and Latina women are more likely to die from heart disease than white women.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Heart Healthy Foods You Should Know About**

Recent American Heart Association guidelines recommend omega-3 fatty acids and folate for people who have a high risk for heart disease.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in fish. Eating fish at least two times a week will give you health benefits. Other sources of omega-3 include walnuts, soybeans and oils made from beans, nuts or seeds.

Folate is a B vitamin found in citrus fruits, leafy greens such as spinach and turnip greens, dry beans and peas and whole grains. Folate is also added to some breakfast cereals.

<sup>1</sup>Medem. JAMA Patient Page: Heart Disease and Women. Available at: [www.medem.com/medlb/article\\_detailb.cfm?article\\_id=zzz52gu3x9d&sub\\_cat=2008](http://www.medem.com/medlb/article_detailb.cfm?article_id=zzz52gu3x9d&sub_cat=2008). Accessed March 27, 2006.

# Heart Disease

## Tests for Heart Disease

You should know about certain health tests and their “normal” results.

**Blood Pressure.** Have it taken every two years until age 40, then annually. If you have heart disease, your doctor will check it during every visit. Normal is 120/80.<sup>2</sup>

**Fasting Cholesterol Test.** Have it checked every 5 years. If you have heart disease, it will be checked more often. Normal results are: HDL 50 or higher; LDL less than 100; and triglycerides less than 150.<sup>2</sup>

**Blood Glucose Test.** Depending on your risk, blood glucose may be checked every 1 to 3 years. If you have heart disease, your doctor may check it more often. Normal

is under 100 on a fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test.<sup>3</sup>

**Body Mass Index (BMI).** Check your BMI periodically. Normal BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9. Overweight is 25 to 29.9. Obesity is 30 and above.<sup>4</sup>

## What Are Your Health Risks?

For heart disease and other health conditions, there are some questions you should ask yourself to understand your risk factors.<sup>5</sup>

- What did my family members die of? At what ages?
- What other diseases run in my family? Who had them, and at what age did they develop?
- What other diseases do I have? Am I being treated for them? Is the treatment working?

- What positive health steps do I take?
- What health risks do I take?
- Am I a smoker?

## What’s Your Action Plan for Health?

Knowing your risk factors and developing an action plan are important steps for taking control of your health. Your action plan is your plan for success — and personal health. Choose a goal to improve your health, and answer the questions below. Think of your goal in terms of T-I-M-E, or Time, Investment, Method and Evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

**Talk to your doctor, and stay on your treatment plan. You are in control of your health. Develop a plan, and move toward a healthier future today.**

**MY GOAL IS:** \_\_\_\_\_

TIME	METHOD
How much do I have?	When will I start the new plan?
How much will I invest?	What will keep me motivated?
INVESTMENT	EVALUATION
What resources are available to me?	How will I measure success? (Be specific.)
Which people will support my efforts?	What are the barriers to my success?
Who are my information/ action experts?	How will I overcome these?

For more information about heart disease, please visit <http://womenshealth.aetna.com>.

<sup>2</sup>American Heart Association. Circulation. Evidence Based Guidelines for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Women. Available at <http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/reprint/01.CIR.0000114834.85476.81v1.pdf>. Accessed March 27, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>American Diabetes Association. Frequently Asked Questions About Pre-diabetes. Available at [www.diabetes.org/util/printthispage.jsp?PageID=ALLABOUTDIABETES\\_233175](http://www.diabetes.org/util/printthispage.jsp?PageID=ALLABOUTDIABETES_233175). Accessed March 27, 2006.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Centers for Disease Control. BMI for Adults: What Does This All Mean? Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/bmi-means.htm>. Accessed March 27, 2006.

<sup>5</sup>Adapted from Personal Health DNA. River City Partnership on Health. 2004.

<sup>6</sup>Adapted from TIME. River City Partnership on Health. 2004.

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