

Your Passport to Cardiovascular Health

My name:

My cardiologist (heart doctor):

Phone: _____

My primary health care provider
(family doctor or nurse practitioner):

Phone: _____



Your Passport to Cardiovascular Health

This pamphlet has information about heart health and how to lower your risk factors for cardiovascular (your heart and blood vessels) health problems. It also has questions for you to answer about your heart health.

What cardiovascular problems do I have?

You have been admitted to the hospital because of a cardiovascular problem.

Have you had any of these heart problems or surgeries?

Check all that apply to you. Ask your nurse or doctor for help if you are not sure.

- ☐ Heart attack
 - ☐ Valve problems
 - ☐ Heart rhythm problems
 - ☐ Heart failure
 - ☐ Angina
 - ☐ Heart surgery
 - ☐ Coronary artery bypass surgery (CABG)
 - ☐ Valve surgery
 - ☐ Balloon angioplasty (stent)
 - ☐ Other: _____
-
-

Have you had any of these vascular (blood vessel) problems?

Check all that apply to you. Ask your nurse or doctor for help if you are not sure.

- ☐ Stroke
- ☐ Transient ischemic attack (TIA). This is also called a **mini-stroke**.
- ☐ Peripheral artery disease (PAD)

Cardiac risk factors

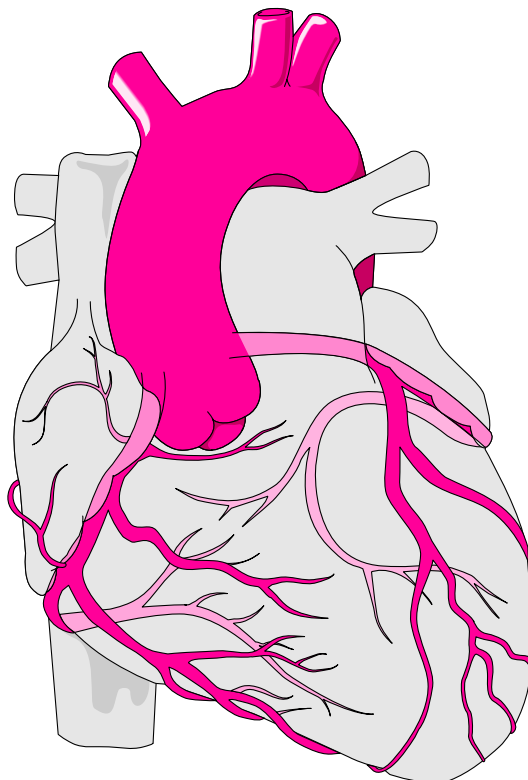
Cardiac risk factors are things that raise your chances of cardiovascular disease. There are some risk factors that you can change, and some risk factors that you cannot change.

Risk factors that you **cannot** change include:

- › Your age
- › Your sex
- › Your personal medical history
- › Your family medical history

Risk factors that you **can** change include:

- › Cholesterol
- › High blood pressure
- › Diabetes
- › Alcohol use
- › Smoking
- › Physical activity
- › Stress
- › Weight



Do I have any of these risk factors?

Check all that apply to you. Ask your nurse or doctor for help if you are not sure.

☐ Family history of heart disease

- This is a risk factor for you if:
 - › Your father or brother had heart disease before they were 55 years old.
- and/or**
- › Your mother or sister had heart disease before they were 65 years old.

☐ Cholesterol (dyslipidemia)

- Abnormal amounts of cholesterol triglyceride in your blood. There are different types of cholesterol. Some types are bad for your health and other types are better for your health.
- **Types of cholesterol:**
 - **LDL:**
 - › Causes more plaque (a mix of fat, cholesterol, and other substances) to build up in your arteries. This is called **atherosclerosis**.
 - › Can cause heart disease to develop faster.
 - › **High LDL levels are harmful to your health.**
 - **HDL:**
 - › Helps move LDL cholesterol to your liver. The liver breaks the LDL cholesterol down.
 - › **High HDL cholesterol levels are good for your health.**

What are your cholesterol and triglyceride levels?

Goals:	My levels:
Total cholesterol:	
LDL: Less than 1.8 mmol/L*	
HDL: More than 1.0 mmol/L	
Triglycerides: Less than 1.7 mmol/L (fasting)	
Non-HDL: Less than 2.6 mmol/L	

*If you have serious heart disease, your doctor may recommend a LDL cholesterol level under **1.4 mmol/L**.

□ High blood pressure (hypertension)

- Your blood pressure (BP) measures the force of the blood moving against your artery walls. Blood pressure is measured in a unit called a millimetre (mm) of mercury (Hg).
- It is written using 2 numbers:
 - › The 1st number is your **systolic blood pressure (BP)**. Systolic BP measures the force of your blood against your artery walls when your heart contracts (gets smaller) and pumps blood out.
 - › The 2nd number is your **diastolic blood pressure (BP)**. Diastolic BP measures the force of your blood against your artery walls when your heart is relaxed and blood is entering it.
- Blood pressure measurements are read by saying that 1st number (your systolic blood BP) is “over” the 2nd number (your diastolic BP). The higher your BP numbers are, the harder your heart is working.
- Having high blood pressure often or for a long time can damage your blood vessel walls.
 - › This makes it easier for plaque to build up in your blood vessel walls. The plaque buildup makes your blood vessel walls narrower. This makes it harder for blood to flow.
- Your blood pressure reading may change depending on where you are when you measure it:
 - › If you are measuring your blood pressure at a hospital or clinic, your blood pressure should be **less than 140/90 mm Hg**.
 - › At home, your blood pressure should be **less than 135/80 mm Hg**.
- If you have diabetes:
 - › Your blood pressure numbers should be **less than 130/80 mm Hg**.

• My most recent blood pressure measurement: _____

Date: _____



☐ Diabetes

- If you have diabetes, your body cannot control the level of sugar (glucose) in your blood, use sugar for energy, or use insulin the way it should.
- You are at higher risk for heart disease if you have diabetes.
- Diabetes can cause high blood sugar levels. High blood sugar may cause more plaque to build up in your arteries.

Do you have diabetes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

My blood sugar reading at the time of my hospital admission: _____

Date: _____

My A1C level: _____

Date: _____

- An A1C test measures the amount of sugar in your blood over 3 months. It is written as a percentage.
 - › Your A1C level should be **less than 6.5%** (as long as you do not have trouble with low blood sugar levels).
 - › For most people with diabetes, your A1C level should be **less than 7%**.

☐ Alcohol

- Drinking less is better for your health. Even having a small amount of alcohol can cause health problems. All types of alcohol (wine, beer, cider, liquor or spirits) can cause health problems.
- If you do choose to drink, have **no more than 2 drinks a week**.

1 drink is:

Beer	355 ml (12 oz)
Cooler or cider	355 ml (12 oz)
Wine	118 ml (4 oz)
Liquor or spirits (like rum, vodka, whiskey, or gin)	30 ml (1 oz)

How many drinks do you usually have?

I have _____ drinks a day.

I have _____ drinks a week.

☐ I do not drink.

☐ Smoking

- Smoking is the leading cause of sickness and death that can be prevented.
- If you smoke, you are 2 times more likely to have a heart attack than someone who does not smoke.
- Smoking causes plaque buildup in your arteries.
- Breathing in second-hand smoke can also raise your risk of heart disease.

☐ I am a smoker.

- How many nicotine cigarettes do you smoke each day?
 - › I have _____ cigarettes a day.
- How often do you smoke cannabis?
 - › I smoke _____ a day.
- How often do you vape (nicotine or cannabis)?
 - › I vape _____ a day.
- How many years have you smoked (nicotine, cannabis, and vapes)?
 - › I have smoked for _____ years.

☐ I quit smoking on _____ (date).

☐ I have never smoked.

☐ Physical inactivity

- **It is important to be active.** Regular exercise helps your heart get stronger and work better.
- Being active can also help control or lower cardiac risk factors (like high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, stress, and weight).
- You are 2 times more likely to have heart disease if you are not active.
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada recommends 150 minutes of physical activity each week (about 20 minutes a day). This can include:
 - › Walking
 - › Biking
 - › Swimming
 - › Raking leaves
 - › Dancing
 - › Playing sports
 - › Jogging

- **The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines suggest:**
 - › 150 minutes a week of moderate to vigorous (hard) activity (talk to your Cardiac Rehab team or primary health care provider about what this means for you)
 - › 2 or more days of the week of strengthening exercises that target all major muscle groups
 - › 2 or more times a week of flexibility exercises (like stretching, yoga, Tai Chi, pilates)
 - › Several hours of light physical activity (including standing) each day
 - › No more than 8 hours a day of sedentary (sitting, resting) time a day
 - › No more than 3 hours of recreational screen time a day
- **Before your hospital stay, were you exercising moderately to vigorously for 150 minutes a week?**

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

☐ **Stress**










- Stress is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Stress is when you feel life's demands are more than you can handle.
- **Do you feel that you are coping well with stress?**

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

☐ **Weight**

- Weight is a risk factor for heart disease. If you are concerned about your weight affecting your heart health, please talk with a registered dietitian, your doctor, or another member of your health care team.

Risk factors	Description	Guidelines	Pre-cardiac Rehab	Post-cardiac Rehab
Triglycerides	Blood fat	Target less than 1.7 mmol/L fasting		
HDL	HDL helps to lower LDL cholesterol by carrying it out of the blood. This may help to decrease plaque buildup.	Target more than 1.0 mmol/L		
LDL	Elevated LDL levels contribute to plaque buildup in arteries and may increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.	High risk target: less than 1.4 mmol/L Moderate risk target: less than 3.5 mmol/L Low risk target: less than 5.0 mmol/L		
Non-HDL	Elevated non-HDL levels are associated with an increased risk of heart disease.	High risk target: less than 2.6 mmol/L Moderate risk target: less than 4.2 mmol/L		
A1C %	3-month average of blood glucose	No diabetes target: less or equal to 5.9% Pre-diabetes: 6.0-6.4 % Diabetes target: less or equal to 7.0%		
Blood pressure	Measured at rest	No diabetes (measured in hospital) target: less than 140/90 No diabetes (measured at home) target: less than 135/85 With diabetes target: less than 130/80		

Fibre	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work on adding more fibre like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes	
Fat	
<input type="checkbox"/> More unsaturated fat like oils, nuts, and some types of fish	
<input type="checkbox"/> Less saturated/trans fat	
Sodium	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work on lowering your daily sodium (salt)	
Sugar	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work on lowering your overall added sugar	
Alcohol	
<input type="checkbox"/> None is best, but if you choose to drink, have less than 2 drinks a week	
Sedentary time	
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 8 hours total a day	
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 3 hours of recreational screen time a day	
Aerobic exercise	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aim for 150 minutes a week of moderate to vigorous physical activity	
<input type="checkbox"/> Try to do several hours a day of light physical activity	
Strengthening exercise	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 or more times a week	
Flexibility	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 or more times a week	

My heart and coronary arteries

☐ Ejection fraction (EF)

- Ejection fraction (EF) measures how well your heart pumps blood. It is written as a percentage. This percentage is usually 50% or higher. Ask your nurse or doctor what your EF is.

• My EF is: _____

Medications

Please keep an up-to-date list of all your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter products, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements) with you to the hospital. Bring the list with you to all your medical appointments.

Medication name:	Dose:	Time:	Comments:

Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

- We recommend that you take part in a Cardiac Rehabilitation Program if there is a program in your area.
- The Cardiac Rehabilitation Program is a 3-month program that includes:
 - › Classes
 - › Exercise
 - › Tips to lower your risk factors
 - › Tips to improve your heart health
- The cardiac rehabilitation health care team includes:
 - › Nurses
 - › Dietitians
 - › Physiotherapists
 - › A cardiologist
- We will refer you to a rehab program in your area.
- For more information about Cardiac Rehabilitation Programs and support groups in your area, please visit:
 - › <https://library.nshealth.ca/Cardiac-Rehab>

Central Zone
Hearts and Health in Motion – Mumford 6960 Mumford Road, Suite 2057, Halifax › Phone: 902-473-3846
Hearts and Health in Motion – Cobequid Community Health Centre 40 Freer Lane, Lower Sackville › Phone: 902-473-3846
Hearts and Health in Motion – Zatzman Sportsplex 110 Wyse Road, Dartmouth › Phone: 902-473-3846

Eastern Zone
Cape Breton Heart and Lung Wellness Centre 1173 Kings Road, Unit 2, Building A › Phone: 902-563-8566
Community Cardiovascular Hearts in Motion St. Martha's Regional Hospital 25 Bay Street, Antigonish › Phone: 902-863-7192 or › Phone: 902-863-7193

Western Zone
Valley Cardiac Rehab Program 150 Exhibition Street, Kentville › Phone: 902-679-2657 extension 2621
South Shore Cardiovascular Rehabilitation Program 42 Glen Allan Drive, South Shore Medical Arts Building, Bridgewater › Phone: 902-527-2417
SWH Cardiac Rehabilitation Program Yarmouth Regional Hospital, 4 th floor, Building C 60 Vancouver Street, Yarmouth › Phone: 902-742-3542 extension 1460

Northern Zone
One Door Chronic Disease Management Centre Cardiac Rehab Program 810 East River Road, New Glasgow › Phone: 902-755-7247

Resources

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

- For information about managing heart disease and heart failure, visit:
 - › www.heartandstroke.ca

Diabetes Canada

- For information, resources, and support for managing diabetes, visit:
 - › www.diabetes.ca/about-diabetes
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-800-226-8464

Tobacco Free Nova Scotia

- This program offers resources and free, confidential (private) support. Visit:
 - › <https://tobaccofree.novascotia.ca>
- To find a local Stop Smoking Program, visit:
 - › <http://mha.nshealth.ca/en/stop-smoking-program#access>

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