



## MEN & HEART DISEASE

Provided by the Caribbean Exploratory Research Center, Community Engagement and Outreach Core  
University of the Virgin Islands, School of Nursing – <http://cercuvi.com/index.php>

In the United States, heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women. Often, though, people don't know they are at risk for heart problems.

Heart disease includes a number of conditions affecting the heart and the blood vessels in the heart. The most common type of heart disease is coronary artery disease, which is the narrowing or blockage of the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart itself. This happens slowly over time and is a major reason people have heart attacks.

A man's risk of heart disease begins to rise greatly starting at age 45. You can lower your risk of heart disease by taking certain steps, including:

- **Don't smoke or use other tobacco products.** If you smoke, get help quitting.
- **Get your blood pressure checked at least every two years.** If you have high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice on how to lower it and keep it under control.
- **Ask your doctor if you need to have your cholesterol and triglyceride levels tested.**
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Learn about your body mass index, or BMI.
- **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** Eat plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and foods that are high in fiber. Limit foods high in saturated fat, cholesterol, trans fat, and sodium.
- **Limit alcohol use.** Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which causes high blood pressure.
- **Make physical activity a habit.** Learn more about the amounts and types of activity that can help.
- **Control diabetes, if you have it.** Make sure to follow your doctor's instructions for medications and lifestyle changes.
- **Talk to your doctor about taking aspirin.** The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that men ages 45 to 79 take aspirin to lower their risk of heart attack when the benefit outweighs the possible harm of gastrointestinal bleeding. Discuss your personal risk of both heart disease and gastrointestinal bleeding with your doctor.

**Source of Information:** Office of Women's and Men's Health  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/mens/health/heart.cfm>

## PREVENTING AND MANAGING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

About 1 of 3 adults in the United States has high blood pressure, which increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States.

High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because it often has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people don't realize they have it. That's why it's important to get your blood pressure checked regularly.

High blood pressure increases your risk for heart disease. People at any age can take steps each day to keep blood pressure levels normal.

### What can you do?

- **Get your blood pressure checked regularly.**
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eat foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. Limit the amount of salt you add to your food.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight can raise your blood pressure. Losing weight can help you lower your blood pressure.
- **Be physically active.** Physical activity can help lower blood pressure. The Surgeon General recommends that adults should engage in moderate physical activities for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking injures blood vessels and speeds up the hardening of the arteries. Further, smoking is a major risk for heart disease and stroke. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease and stroke. Your doctor can suggest programs to help you quit.
- **Limit alcohol use.** Drinking too much alcohol is associated with high blood pressure. If you drink alcohol, you should do so in moderation—no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men.

**Source of Information:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)