

Managing excess weight and heart disease risk



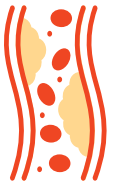
Understanding the link between weight and heart disease

Living with excess weight can raise your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The term “cardiovascular disease” includes all types of problems that affect your heart and blood vessels. This includes heart disease and potentially life-changing events such as having a heart attack or stroke. Work with a healthcare professional to manage your weight and learn about what you can do to help **lower your risks for heart disease**.

High blood pressure

Extra weight can raise your risk of having **high blood pressure**. This means the heart has to work harder to pump blood through your body. Having a high blood pressure can cause damage to arteries, making them less flexible. This reduces blood flow and oxygen to the heart, which could lead to heart disease. High blood pressure also leads to an increased risk of heart attack, heart failure, and stroke.

High cholesterol



Carrying extra weight can raise your levels of LDL (the “bad” cholesterol) and lower levels of HDL (the “good” cholesterol). It may also increase triglycerides, a type of fat found in the blood. **High levels of LDL cholesterol and triglycerides** can lead to fatty buildup in your blood vessels. This build up may get trapped in your arteries causing blood clots and raise the chance of a heart attack or stroke.

Blood glucose

Excess weight can make the body less responsive to insulin, a hormone that regulates blood glucose (*sugar*) levels. When this happens, your body doesn’t use insulin as it should. As a result, blood glucose levels can rise, putting you at a higher **risk for type 2 diabetes**. People with diabetes are twice as likely to have heart disease or a stroke.

What weight loss can do for you

Losing just 5% or more of your total body weight can have many **health benefits**. This small reduction may improve heart disease risk factors like high blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose. For example, someone who weighs 250 lb might see benefits in health markers by losing 13 lb or more.



What you can do to help lower your risk

Work with your healthcare professional to help manage your weight and heart disease risk factors. Here are a few actions to consider:



-  **Choose a heart-healthy meal plan.**
Focus on eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables while limiting salt, fat, sugar, and alcohol.
-  **Increase physical activity.**
Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking or cycling.
-  **Maintain a healthy weight.**
Talk to your healthcare professional to develop a personalized weight-management plan.
-  **Take all your medicines as prescribed.**
Follow instructions carefully and ask your healthcare team questions if you're unsure about any of them.
-  **Quit smoking.**
If you smoke, seek support to quit. If you don't smoke, don't start.
-  **Talk with your healthcare team.**
Discuss your test results with your healthcare professional regularly and understand how often you need a follow-up.

Setting goals

Work with your healthcare professional to set goals that are right for you. Use the space below to help **understand your goals**.



Current weight		Goal weight	
Current body mass index (BMI)		Goal BMI	
Current blood pressure		Goal blood pressure	
Current cholesterol levels		Goal cholesterol levels	
Current triglycerides		Goal triglycerides	
Current A1C		Goal A1C	
Current fasting blood glucose		Goal fasting blood glucose	
Other levels _____		Goal _____	

