



Session 20: Heart Health

In the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death for **both** men and women. People with pre-diabetes and/or the metabolic syndrome are at higher risk for developing heart disease. The good news is that leading a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk.

What is heart disease?

- Heart disease, also known as cardiovascular disease, is a group of diseases and conditions that affect the heart (cardio) and blood vessels (vascular).
- Examples of heart disease include heart attack, high blood pressure, and stroke.

What are the risk factors for heart disease? The American Heart Association has identified the following risk factors:

Increasing age
Sex (male)
Heredity (including race)
Smoking
Physical inactivity
High blood cholesterol
High blood pressure
Diabetes
Obesity and Overweight

- Other factors associated with increased risk of heart disease include stress, alcohol, and diet.
- The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk of heart disease.
- Many risk factors can be controlled by being physically active and eating a healthy diet.

A heart-healthy lifestyle is your best defense against heart disease.

Facts about Cholesterol

- **Cholesterol** is a soft, waxy substance. Your liver makes all the cholesterol your body needs each day. You also get cholesterol from animal foods you eat, such as meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, and dairy products.
- **HDL (high-density lipoprotein)**, “good cholesterol”, removes cholesterol from the body, preventing it from building up in the arteries thus protecting against heart disease.
- **LDL (low-density lipoprotein)**, “bad cholesterol”, carries harmful cholesterol in the blood. High levels can lead to blockages in the arteries, thus increasing the risk of heart disease.
- **Triglycerides** are the most common type of fat in the body. High levels may increase the risk of heart disease.

Facts about Blood Pressure

- Blood pressure is the force exerted against the walls of the blood vessels as blood flows through.
- Blood pressure is measured with two readings:
 - Systolic (upper number) is the pressure against the walls of the arteries during a contraction or heart beat.
 - Diastolic (lower number) is the pressure against the walls of the arteries during the relaxation phase (the heart is at rest between beats).
- Having high blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and kidney failure. The higher the blood pressure; the greater the risk.
- High blood pressure is called the “silent killer” because there are usually no symptoms to warn you something is wrong.

Preventing or Managing Heart Disease



The American Heart Association identified seven steps, called "Life's Simple 7™", to improve health. These guidelines reflect those established for the GLB program.

1. Eat a healthy diet

- Eat at least 4.5 cups of fruits and vegetables a day.
- Have at least two 3.5 ounce servings of fish a week (preferably oily fish).
- Eat at least 3 servings of fiber-rich whole grains a day.
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages to not more than 450 calories (36 ounces) per week.
- Eat less than 1500 mg of sodium a day.

2. Maintain a healthy body weight

3. Take charge of cholesterol

- **Goals for cholesterol - *Think 50, 100, 150, 200***
 - HDL – greater than **50** mg/dL (for women)
greater than **40** mg/dL (for men)
 - LDL – less than 130 mg/dL (under **100 mg/dL** is optimal)
 - Triglycerides – less than **150 mg/dL**
 - Total cholesterol – less than **200 mg/dL**
- Testing is recommended starting at age 20.
- Have your cholesterol profile done at least every five years to age 40, then every year.

4. Manage blood pressure

- Normal - less than 120/80 mm/Hg
- Pre-hypertension - 120-139/80-89 mm/Hg
- High blood pressure/hypertension - 140/90 mm/Hg or higher

DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)

- The DASH diet emphasizes fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, low-fat dairy products, foods high in fiber, and the minerals calcium, potassium, and magnesium.
- The DASH diet recommends a moderate fat intake of 25-30% of total calories with an emphasis on using unsaturated fats in place of saturated fats.
- The diet also recommends limiting sodium and alcohol.

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf

5. Keep blood sugar, or glucose, at healthy levels

- Normal fasting blood glucose – under 100 mg/dl
- Pre-diabetes – 100-125 mg/dl
- Diabetes – 126 mg/dl or higher

6. Engage in regular physical activity

- The American Heart Association suggests at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on 5 days each week.
- Regular physical activity improves risk factors such as blood pressure and cholesterol and blood glucose levels. It also strengthens your heart muscle, improves blood circulation, reduces feelings of stress, and helps control body weight.



7. Don't smoke

Even one lifestyle change can make a difference. A combination of two or more lifestyle changes may achieve even better results.

Web sites for heart health information:

- American Heart Association:
www.americanheart.org
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute:
www.nhlbi.nih.gov
- National Cholesterol Education Program:
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd



The GLB program not only can lower your risk of developing diabetes, it is also heart-healthy!

A Sneak Peak at What's Ahead (The Next Session)



To do:

The Basics:

- Keep track of your weight.
 - Weigh yourself at home daily or at least once a week at the same time of day.
 - Record your weight in the Keeping Track book.
- Keep track of what you eat and drink using the Keeping Track book.
- Keep track of your physical activity in the Keeping Track book.
- Be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week.

Challenge Yourself:

- Check your numbers. Do your blood pressure, blood glucose and blood lipid levels fall within the recommended guidelines?

Additional Notes:
