

HEART HEALTH

Women with diabetes are at higher risk for cardiovascular (heart) disease (CVD). They may have heart attacks and strokes up to 20-30 years earlier than women without diabetes. CVD happens when sticky plaque builds up on the walls of the arteries and partially clogs them, making it harder for blood to flow and more likely for it to clot and stop the blood flow entirely.

Examples of CVD:

- **Heart attack** – clot that stops blood flow to part of the heart
- **Angina** – partially clogged arteries that cause chest pain with activity that resolves with rest
- **History of cardiac bypass surgery** to bypass clogged arteries of the heart
- **Ischemic Stroke** – clot that stops blood flow to part of the brain
- **Mini-stroke or Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)** – clot that temporarily stops blood flow to part of the brain
- **Aneurysm** – partially clogged artery that risks rupture and bleeding
- **Peripheral artery disease** - Blockage in leg arteries that may cause leg pain with activity

Ways to Reduce CVD Risk

- **Get active** - Walk briskly or do other physical activities for at least 30 minutes daily. Ten minutes, 3 times daily is just as effective as 30 minutes at one time.
- **Balance food choices; increase vegetable intake.** – Make half your plate vegetables. Choose small portions of fruit to bolster vitamins and fiber while limiting high blood sugar.
- **Quit smoking.** You can do it! Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or go to women.smokefree.gov.
- **Reduce body weight by 5-10 lbs.** and maintaining may improve blood pressure and blood sugars.

Heart Health ABCs

	Prevention NO prior history of CVD	Treatment PRIOR HISTORY of CVD
Aspirin Is it right for me?	It depends on other risk factors. Ask your doctor if aspirin is appropriate preventive treatment.	Aspirin 81 mg daily is the typical recommended dose. Discuss with your doctor if you are not taking aspirin.
Blood pressure What is my goal?	Less than 140/90 mm Hg*	Less than 140/90 mm Hg*
Cholesterol What about statin† meds?	Recommended for women with diabetes age 40+	Recommended for all women with prior history of CVD

**Some guidelines recommend blood pressure goals less than 150/90 mm Hg for adults age 60 years and older.*

†Statin medications include simvastatin, atorvastatin, pravastatin, ceruvastatin, and others.