

# Risk Factors

## for Heart Disease and Stroke

A number of factors can put you at greater risk for heart disease and stroke. While you cannot change some risk factors – such as age, gender, race, ethnicity and family history – others can be controlled to prevent heart disease and stroke.

### Are you at risk for heart disease and stroke?

Certain medical conditions and lifestyle choices increase your risk for heart disease and stroke including:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obese or overweight
- Lack of physical activity
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Poor nutrition

The good news is there are steps you can take to eliminate or reduce these risk factors and live a longer, healthier life.

### Reducing your risk

Health experts recommend several changes to help lower your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

- If you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes, take your medicine as prescribed and visit your health care provider on a regular basis to monitor any changes in your condition.
- Stop smoking.
- Be physically active at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean meat. Avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt and foods that are highly processed.
- Maintain a healthy weight.



### Do you want to know more?

More information about the individual risk factors for heart disease and stroke can be found at:

- **High blood pressure:**  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/highbloodpressure.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/highbloodpressure.pdf)
- **High cholesterol:**  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/cholesterol.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/cholesterol.pdf)
- **Diabetes:**  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/diabetes.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/diabetes.pdf)
- **Smoking:**  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/smoking.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/smoking.pdf)
- **Nutrition and physical activity:**  
[www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/nutrition.pdf](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartandStroke/nutrition.pdf)

More information can be found at:

- [www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/HeartDisease/)
- [www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Stroke/)

