### Your Risk of Heart and Vascular Disease

#### Factors You Can Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoking/Tobacco Use</td>
<td>Smoking makes your blood clot easier and causes arteries to tighten which makes your heart work harder and can damage your blood vessels. Do not use tobacco products and avoid second-hand smoke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood pressure:</td>
<td>To lower your risk of heart disease and stroke, your top number (systolic) should be less than 140 mmHg and the bottom number (diastolic) should be less than 90 mmHg. When you check at home, we would like to see numbers about 135/85 mmHg or lower. Your doctor may want your blood pressure numbers lower than 140/90 and will talk with you about treatment goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol (lipid) levels</td>
<td>High cholesterol can cause faster build-up of blockages in the heart, neck, and leg arteries. If you have diabetes mellitus (high blood sugar), heart disease or are at high risk for developing heart disease, guidelines suggest using statins or other cholesterol medicines to lower your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by at least 50% (typically to &lt;100 mg/dl). Keep your triglycerides (fats) less than 150 and HDL (“good”) cholesterol more than 40 (men) or 50 (women).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight: BMI</td>
<td>Extra weight makes your heart work harder and can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart failure. Your Body Mass Index (BMI), which is determined by your height and weight, should be in the range of 18.5 – 25 kg/m² range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job or family stress</td>
<td>Stress can make your heart work harder. It is important to manage your stress and ask for help if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes mellitus</td>
<td>Uncontrolled diabetes increases your risk of heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and nerve pain. If you have diabetes and heart disease, your hemoglobin A₁C goal is usually 7.0-7.5% or less. Depending on your age and risk of low blood sugar, your doctor will set the best goal for you. Hemoglobin A₁C of 5.7-6.4% means you have pre-diabetes. Hemoglobin A₁C of 6.5% or more means you have diabetes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary lifestyle</td>
<td>Regular exercise lowers your risk. Try to exercise at least 2.5 hours per week.</td>
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#### Factors You Cannot Change

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<td>Age</td>
<td>Your risk of heart disease increases as you get older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history</td>
<td>Even though you cannot change your genetic makeup, you can lower your risk by making healthy choices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How You Can Lower the Risk

- **Smoking:** Quit now! You will see benefits right away. There are many resources to help you. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for more information.

- **High Blood Pressure:**
  - Take your medicines as ordered.
  - Lose weight.
  - Lower your salt, caffeine and alcohol intake.
  - Get regular exercise.
  - If you snore or have sleep apnea, talk to your primary care doctor.

- **High Blood Lipids:**
  - Take your medicines as ordered.
  - Lower the amount of saturated and trans-fats, simple carbohydrates and sugar you eat.
  - Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains.
  - Lose weight and get regular exercise.
  - Talk with your doctor about how often you should get your cholesterol checked.

- **Overweight:**
  - Lower the amount of calories, sugar, saturated and trans-fat that you eat.
  - Increase your daily activity.
  - Read nutrition labels. Think about meeting with a dietician.

- **Overstressed:**
  - Manage your stress.
  - Learn about ways you can relax and manage your time.
  - Talk with others about your feelings.
  - Exercise.

- **Diabetes:** People with diabetes should eat healthy and get daily exercise. This can help your body to use insulin better to lower your blood sugar levels.

- **Inactive Lifestyle:**
  - Begin an exercise program.
  - Walk more. (Use the stairs, park in the farthest space from the store).
  - Make healthy choices.

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**Need Cardiac Rehab? **☐Yes  Your local cardiac rehab program is: ___________________

If you have had a recent heart attack, bypass, valve or transplant surgery, angioplasty/stent or congestive heart failure, it is important for you to participate in cardiac rehab. Being active in cardiac rehab has been shown to greatly lower your risk of future heart problems and will help you heal. The program includes exercise and education to help you manage your heart and vascular disease risk factors. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at:

UW Health Preventive Cardiology/Cardiac Rehab  
(608) 263-6630 (between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm)

**Need Cardiac Rehab? **☐No

If you have questions or concerns, please call your Primary Care Clinic at _________________.

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The Spanish version of this Health Facts for You is #7739

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor 5/2017 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF #5817