



mercy care



# LIVING WELL WITH CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

Spring/Summer 2021

## Diabetes and heart disease: What's the link?

Diabetes and heart disease often go hand in hand. In fact, diabetes makes high blood pressure and high cholesterol more likely.

Many people with diabetes don't know they have it. Instead of taking chances, ask your doctor if you should be tested.

If you do have heart disease and diabetes, there are plenty of ways to stay on top of both conditions. To start:

1. **Set goals.** Ask your doctor what yours should be for blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol and weight. Then work together to reach them.
2. **Have a heart-healthy diet.** That means:
  - Eat lots of fruits, veggies and whole grains.
  - Choose lean cuts of meat and fish and skinless poultry.

- Stick to fat-free and low-fat dairy products.
- Go easy on added sugars.

3. **Stay active.** Aim for 150 minutes a week.
4. **Don't smoke.** If you need to quit, your doctor can help.
5. **Ease stress.** Develop healthy self-care strategies like deep breathing, connecting with friends and getting plenty of sleep.
6. **Take your medicines.** Even if you feel fine, don't skip or stop them. They're helping to keep you well.

Sources: American Diabetes Association ([www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)); American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org))

## 4 ways to take charge

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.
3. Take your medications.
4. Aim for healthy habits.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ([www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov))

## Understand your heart meds

Living well with heart disease may mean taking certain medicines. If your doctor prescribes them for you, it's a good idea to understand what they do. For example:

**Beta blockers.** These drugs take stress off the heart. They help lower blood pressure, which helps the heart beat more slowly and with less force. Doctors also use them to treat abnormal heart rhythms and chest pain.

**Blood thinners.** Don't let their name mislead you. These drugs don't actually thin blood. Instead, they help keep harmful clots from forming in blood vessels. They can also keep existing clots from getting bigger and more dangerous.

**Statins.** These medicines help lower LDL, the bad cholesterol. They may also boost HDL, the good kind.

### Make the most of your medicine

It's important to take your medicines exactly as prescribed, even if you feel fine. Used the right way, they can help you avoid a heart attack or stroke.

If you're concerned about side effects, tell your doctor. A different dose or medicine may work better. Don't stop your medicine without your doctor's OK.

Sources: American College of Cardiology ([www.cardiosmart.org](http://www.cardiosmart.org)); American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org))



## Know the risks of opioids

Opioids are strong pain medicines. They're easy to get addicted to.

If you need help with pain, talk to your doctor about safer options. If you use an opioid, take the smallest dose you can for the shortest time, and ask about Narcan. It could save your life.

Want to be drug-free? Call the National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov))

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**Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to [www.MercyCareAZ.org](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org) or call Member Services at **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.**

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Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

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If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

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### Contact us

Mercy Care, 4755 S. 44th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85040  
Member Services: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)**

Monday through Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM

24-hour nurse line: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879**

**[www.MercyCareAZ.org](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org)**

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