

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Heart Attack

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The following questions can help you talk to your physician about your individual risk for having a heart attack or about recovery and prevention if you have already had one. **Print out or write down these questions and take them with you to your appointment.** Taking notes can help you remember your physician's response when you get home.

### If you are concerned about your risk for a first heart attack...

- Based on my **family history**, am I at high risk for a heart attack?
- Based on my **personal history**, am I at high risk for a heart attack?
- What can I do to help **prevent** a heart attack?
- Are the **symptoms** I have been having a warning sign of heart disease?
- Do my **cholesterol levels** put me at risk for a heart attack? If so, what can I do to get my cholesterol to goal levels?
- Is my **weight** within a healthy range?
- Can you help me quit **smoking**? (If you smoke.)
- Is my **blood pressure** within the normal range? Can you help me control high blood pressure?
- What **dietary choices** should I be making for cardiovascular health?
- What level of **exercise** is safe for me and will also have cardiovascular benefits?
- If I have **diabetes**, what can I do to control it better?

### If you have had a heart attack...

If you have been treated for a heart attack, it is normal to be worried and to want as much information about likely outcomes as possible. The months following a heart attack can be a particularly difficult time, as you recover from the heart attack and any procedures you had performed, adopt new lifestyle and medication routines, and manage any emotional responses you may have to your experience.

The questions below can lay the groundwork for a discussion between you and your physician about what comes next after a heart attack.

- What is my **prognosis**? What are the likely **outcomes**?
- What will **recovery** look like for me after the heart attack and any procedures I was treated with, such as angioplasty and stenting or bypass surgery?
- What **follow-up** will be necessary?
- Will I be able to have my desired **quality of life**? What can I do to improve the odds of this?
- Can you recommend a **cardiac rehabilitation** program?
- What **lifestyle changes** do I need to make?
- Are my **cholesterol levels** putting me at risk for a recurrent heart attack? If so, what can I do to get my cholesterol to goal levels?
- If I have **diabetes**, what can I do to control it better?
- What do I need to know about the **medications** that have been prescribed?
- Who can I turn to for **support** (hospital staff, support groups, etc.)?