



If you have
Diabetes
you are at risk for
**Heart
Disease**



Ken Williams (Seneca) has diabetes and heart disease. He knows controlling his blood sugar helps his heart.

➤ Please, take care of your heart!

Toni Williams' (Northern Arapaho) husband was just diagnosed with diabetes. Toni knows about diabetes. She is the Diabetes Coordinator for the Indian Walk-In Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. She has diabetes, too. What was the first thing to come to Toni's mind when she found out her husband Ken (Seneca) had diabetes? "I am so worried about his heart," says Toni.

Toni knows the complications of diabetes. People who have the disease must take good care of their feet, eyes, kidneys, heart and teeth. Although all the complications worry her, it is heart disease that worries her the most. “Your risk for heart disease is much greater if you have diabetes. A person with diabetes is 2-4 times more likely to have heart disease or a stroke than a person without diabetes,” she explains.

Before Ken found out he had diabetes, he had two heart attacks. “They were sudden. He was flown by helicopter to the hospital. It was scary,” remembers Toni.

Toni does not want this to happen again. She does not want others with diabetes to go through such a frightening experience. There are things you can do to take care of your heart. Find out as much as you can about heart disease. This is your first step to having a healthy heart.



Questions & Answers

About Heart Disease

What is heart disease?

Heart disease is a group of heart problems that includes chest pain, heart attack and heart failure.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Are there different kinds of heart disease?

Yes. There are several different kinds of heart disease, such as disease of the heart valves, disease of the heart muscle, and disease of the blood vessels (arteries) that carry blood to the heart (coronary heart disease).

Coronary heart disease is increasing in American Indian and Alaska Native populations. Coronary heart disease causes heart attacks and sudden death.

Who gets heart disease?

People with one or more risk factors are more likely to get heart disease than people who don't have any risk factors.

What are risk factors for heart disease?

Risk factors are the conditions that increase your chances for getting heart disease. The most common risk factors for heart disease are:

- being overweight
- having pre-diabetes
- having diabetes, and having blood sugar that is out of control
- having high cholesterol

- having high blood pressure, and having high blood pressure that is out of control
- being inactive
- smoking or using tobacco

The above risk factors can be changed. However the following risk factors cannot be changed:

- being over age 40
- having family members with heart disease, especially a mother, father, brother or sister who developed heart disease at a young age (under 55 for men and under 65 for women)

How can you reduce your risk?

There are things you can do to reduce your chances for getting heart disease. You can:

- keep blood pressure under control
- keep cholesterol at healthy levels
- don't smoke
- follow a healthy meal plan -- one that is low in saturated fat, and includes more vegetables, fruits and lean meats
- keep weight at or close to normal range -- if a person is overweight, losing just a few pounds is helpful
- be physically active every day
- prevent diabetes by eating healthy foods, being physically active, and losing 5-10 pounds if you are overweight

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- control your blood sugar levels if you have diabetes -- your health care provider can help you set blood sugar level goals

- be more active
- keep your scheduled appointments with your health care provider
- stop smoking

How can you lose weight?

If you want to lose weight, a slow loss of 1-2 pounds a week is best. You can lose weight by:

- making healthy food choices
- becoming more active

Your health care provider can help you with a weight-loss plan.

What about high cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of fat in the blood. Bad cholesterol or LDL can build up and clog the blood vessels. Clogged blood vessels can lead to heart disease. Here are the things you can do to lower your cholesterol:

- eat less meat and fried food
- eat more fruits and vegetables
- be more active
- lose weight if you are overweight
- stop smoking
- get your cholesterol checked at least once a year

Ask your health care provider about your cholesterol numbers. Your LDL cholesterol should be below 100 if you have diabetes. Some people may need medicine to help lower their cholesterol.

What if you have diabetes?

People with diabetes are more likely than others to die from heart attacks. Controlling your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol level will help reduce your risk. If you smoke, stop. And ask your health care provider about whether or not you should take aspirin to help prevent heart disease.

What can you do to control blood sugar?

These are the things you can do to control your blood sugar:

- if you are overweight, lose weight
- make healthy food choices
- be more active
- take your diabetes medicine at the same time each day
- keep your scheduled appointments with your health care provider
- know your A1c number -- ask your health care provider what your A1c should be -- a suggested target is below 7
- know your blood sugar levels

What are ways to make healthy food choices?

Here are some ways to make healthy food choices:

- eat less fat food
- eat less sugar food and drinks
- eat fewer snacks
- eat more fruit and vegetables
- eat more high-fiber grains
- drink less alcohol
- drink more water
- eat three meals a day
- space meals 4-5 hours apart
- eat regular-sized portions
- avoid second helpings

What about high blood pressure?

High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. You may not know if your blood pressure is high, so check it often. Your blood pressure should be below 130/80. If you have high blood pressure, these are the things you need to do:

- take your blood pressure pills
- check your blood pressure often
- cut down on salt and salty food
- lose weight
 - make healthy food choices

What if you are overweight?

Extra weight makes your heart work harder. Losing 10-20 pounds will help you lower your risk for heart disease.

What are ways to become more active?

Walking is a good way to be more active. Walk five days or more a week. Start small and work up to 30 minutes each time. Other physical activity is also good for you. Try:

- riding a bike
- hiking the hills
- dancing
- walking in shallow water
- canoeing
- swimming

Check with your health care provider about becoming more active. Some people may need a stress test.



Know your numbers

Your health care provider can order simple tests to check your blood sugar, cholesterol and other blood fats. People with pre-diabetes, diabetes and heart disease need these tests. Find out your numbers, and keep a record. Ask your health care provider what numbers or goals are best for you.

Date	A1C (goal -- below 7%)	Blood Pressure (goal -- below 130/80)	Total Cholesterol (goal -- below 200)	HDL (goal -- men - above 40, women - above 45)	LDL (goal -- below 100)	Triglycerides (goal -- below 150)

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