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DIABETES AND HEART DISEASE

What does diabetes have to do with heart disease?

People with diabetes are more likely to get heart disease. Heart disease, being overweight and diabetes often go together. If you are overweight, you are much more likely to develop type 2 diabetes (the type that you are not born with!). If you are overweight, you are much more likely to develop heart disease.

If you develop type 2 diabetes, then there are measures that you can take to aid in managing the diabetes and lowering the risk of heart disease.

Lose weight--and keep it off.

Weight loss is important if you have a lot of extra weight, particularly in your stomach area. People of the 'apple' shape who tend to put weight on around the middle are much more likely to develop risk factors than the 'pear' shape, who tend to show weight gain around the bottom and thigh areas.

In Australia, the 'beer belly' is really a concern. When you look at the stereotype, you are actually looking at someone who has an extremely high risk of heart disease and diabetes and, unfortunately, has a significantly higher risk of premature death.

Control your blood sugar levels .

If you are a diabetic, you must learn to control your intake of sugar through diet and lifestyle changes.

Lower your cholesterol level.

As shown in the section of this website on cholesterol, too much cholesterol in your blood can clog your arteries. This can lead to heart disease. You need to take measures to lower your cholesterol.

Increase your physical activity.

Exercise is important for all people, but particularly if you have diabetes. Diet and exercise work together to help your body to work properly. A change in diet, coupled with regular exercise can help you to lose weight more quickly.

Exercise will also help keep your blood sugar level normal and can lower your risk of heart disease.

Control your blood pressure.

If you have diabetes you will often have high blood pressure too. High blood pressure increases your risk for heart disease.

The same lifestyle changes that control blood sugar levels and lower your risk of heart disease may also keep your blood pressure at safe levels. Weight loss and exercise are important.

Dr Flood may also prescribe blood pressure medications.

Don't Smoke

Smoking is bad for everyone, but it's even worse for people with diabetes because it damages the blood vessels. If you have diabetes and you also smoke, you double your risk of getting heart disease.

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