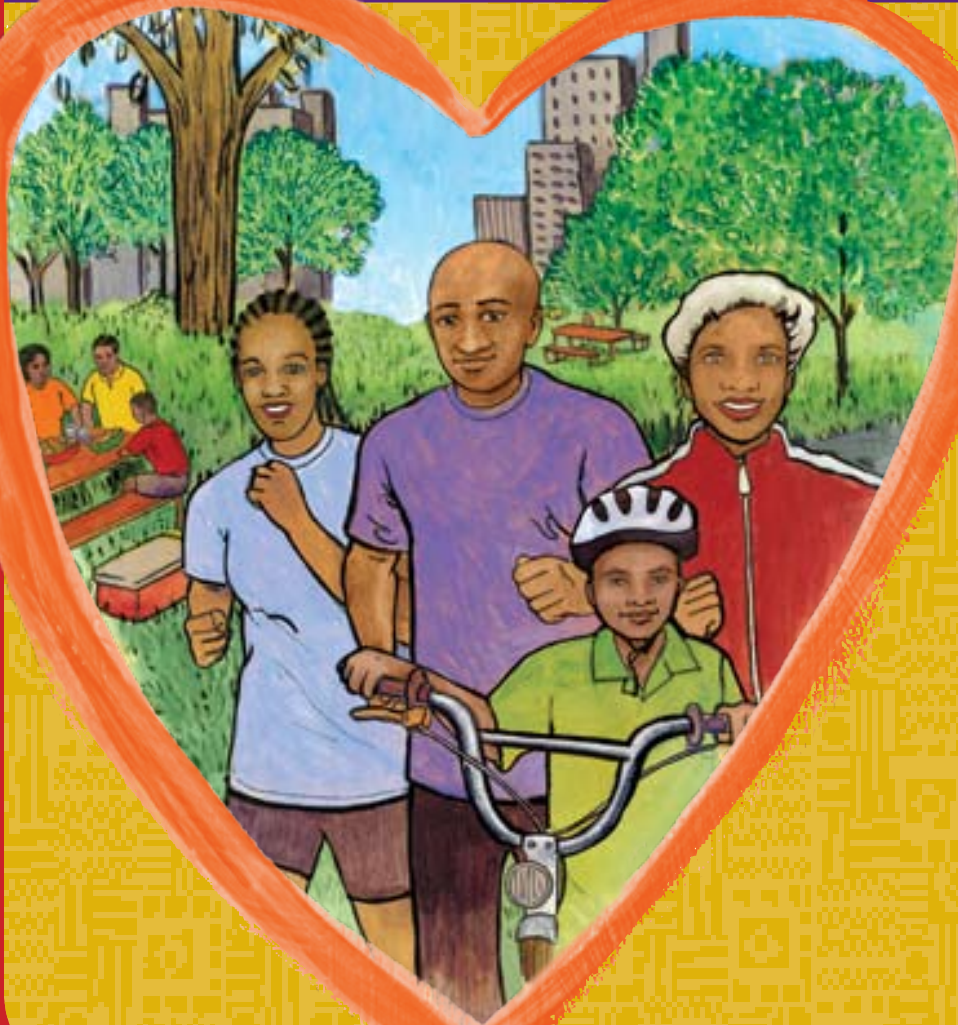


On the Move to Better Heart Health for African Americans



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

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On the Move to Better Heart Health for African Americans



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health

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**National Heart
Lung and Blood Institute**
People Science Health

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Introduction

African Americans and Heart Disease

Heart disease is a serious health problem for all Americans, especially African Americans. Although it is the #1 killer of Americans, most people are not aware that they are at risk for heart disease. Many African Americans believe that a heart attack or stroke happens suddenly because of a scary experience, getting bad news, or having strong feelings like anger. A heart attack or stroke may seem sudden, but the truth is that heart disease happens over many years. It often starts at a very young age.

This booklet explains what heart disease is and its risk factors. It presents information in an easy-to-read format and includes helpful tips to improve your health. When you learn and use information that can improve your health, you have hope for a healthy future.

Risk Factors

High blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, and diabetes can increase the risk for heart disease, so they are called risk factors. You can reduce your risk by making lifestyle changes. All you need is a little information, a few skills, and a bit of motivation.



Easy-To-Read Booklet

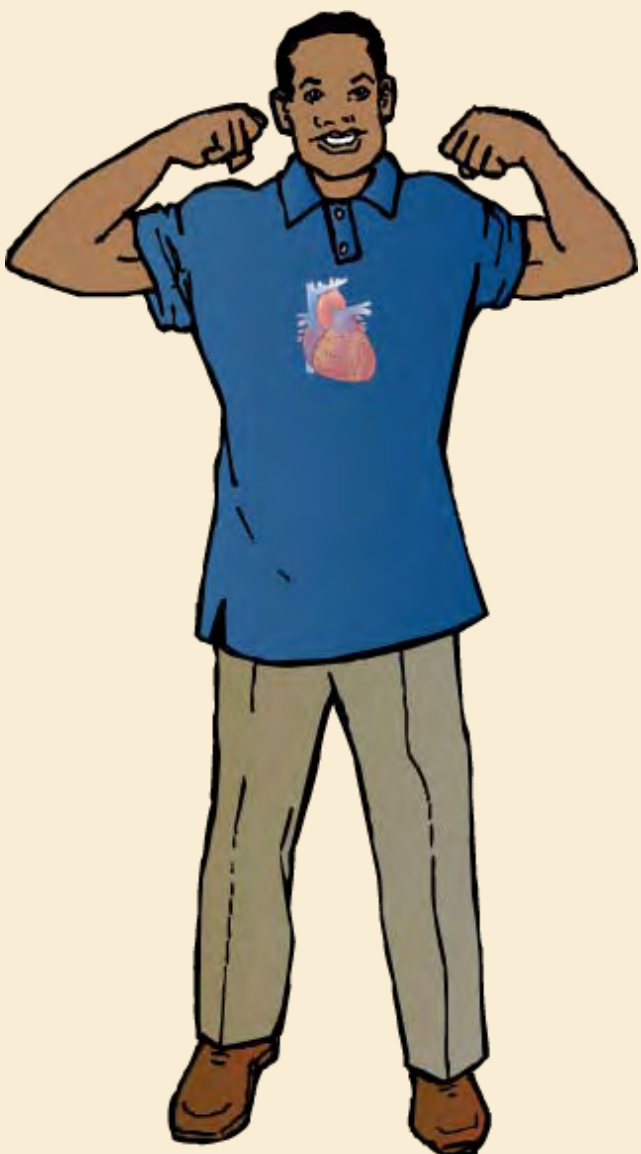
This easy-to-read booklet is filled with practical information that can help you reduce your risk for heart disease. You will be introduced to the Harris family who will share what they did to prevent and control their risk factors. Join them and take steps to prevent heart disease in your family.

Hope for a Healthy Future

Taking steps to prevent heart disease at any age is important. Caring for your heart is one of the most important things you can do for your health and the health of your family. Future generations are counting on you.



Section 1: Knowledge Is Power: Know Your Risk for Heart Disease



Knowledge Is Power: Know Your Risk for Heart Disease

Knowing whether you are at risk for heart disease can empower you to do something about it. This section will help you identify your risk for heart disease.

The Amazing Heart

Your heart is one of your strongest muscles. It pumps blood to all parts of your body through miles of blood vessels all day. Blood carries the nutrients and oxygen your body needs to keep going. The heart is so important; you want to keep it healthy. When the heart stops, life stops.



What Is Heart Disease?

Heart disease develops over many years. It happens when the blood vessels going to the heart become narrow and clogged. Clogged arteries increase the risk of developing heart disease.



Ms. Diane Learns About Risk Factors

Ms. Diane: "The doctor told me that I have high blood pressure and diabetes. High blood pressure and diabetes put me at risk for heart disease. Now that I know my risk factors, I take steps to lower my risk."



What Are Risk Factors?

Risk factors are traits and habits that make you more likely to develop heart disease. There are some risk factors that you can do something about; others you cannot change. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chances of heart disease.

Are You at Risk for Heart Disease?

Look at the list of risk factors below. Check all your risk factors.

Risk factors that you can do something about:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ Being overweight | ☐ Not sure |
| ☐ Lack of physical activity | |
| ☐ High blood cholesterol | ☐ Not sure |
| ☐ High blood pressure | ☐ Not sure |
| ☐ Diabetes | ☐ Not sure |
| ☐ Cigarette smoking | |

Risk factors you cannot change:

- ❑ Age (45 years or older for men, 55 years or older for women)
- ❑ Family history—
 - Father or brother with heart disease before age 55
 - Mother or sister with heart disease before age 65

The more risk factors you checked, the greater your chances of developing heart disease.

Lower Your Risk for Heart Disease

Here are things Ms. Diane and her family are doing to lower their risk for heart disease:

- **Lose weight.** “We eat smaller portions. If we are still hungry, we have salad.”
- **Get 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.** “We walk together after dinner every night.”
- **Eat less saturated fat and sodium.** “I bake chicken instead of frying. I use herbs instead of salt to season our food.”



- **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** “We enjoy them with meals, as a snack, or for dessert.”



- **Limit beverages and foods with sugar.** “We limit sweets, such as doughnuts, cookies, and soda.”



- **Quit smoking.** “Our home is smoke free.”

- **Have regular checkups.** “We track our weight, waist measurement, blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugar (test for diabetes) using our Heart Health Cards” (on page 69).



You can lower your risk, too. When you change your lifestyle behaviors by doing some of these things, you **will** live longer.

Section 2: Act in Time to Heart Attack Signs!



Act in Time to Heart Attack Signs!

Did you know that healthy choices can reduce your risk factors for heart disease and protect your heart? Sometimes, despite our best efforts, heart disease can result in a heart attack. That is why it is important to know the warning signs of a heart attack and what to do if you experience them. Quick action can help save your life or the life of someone else. This section will help you learn the warning signs of a heart attack.

Heart Attack Warning Signs

The most common heart attack warning sign for men and women is chest pain or discomfort. Sometimes the pain or discomfort is mild, and the warning signs come and go. Most people have more than one warning sign. Some signs can occur at the same time.

If you feel any of the signs listed on the next page, call 9–1–1 right away. Anyone with heart attack signs needs to get medical care at once. Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out. Every minute counts!

Ms. Diane: "Since my sister died of a heart attack, it is important for me to know the heart attack warning signs. My doctor told me that it is best to call 9–1–1 immediately if I have any of the signs."



Heart Attack Warning Signs

1. Your chest hurts or feels squeezed.
2. One or both arms, your back, or stomach hurt.
3. You feel pain in the neck or jaw.
4. You feel like you can't breathe.
5. You feel light-headed or break out in a cold sweat.
6. You feel sick to your stomach.

Be prepared. Develop a heart attack survival plan and keep it handy.

Chest pain



**Arm, back, or
stomach pain**



Neck or jaw pain



Trouble breathing



**Feeling light-headed or
breaking into a cold sweat**



**Feeling sick to
your stomach**

My Heart Attack Survival Plan

Follow these steps to prepare for a possible heart attack.

1. Learn the heart attack warning signs.
2. Think about what to do in case of a heart attack.
3. Talk with family and friends about the heart attack warning signs and the importance of calling 9–1–1 (or my local emergency number) right away.
4. Talk to the doctor about my risk of a heart attack.
5. Talk to the doctor about what to do if I experience any of the heart attack warning signs.
6. Fill out the “My Emergency Card,” and share it with my family.



My Emergency Card

Cut along dotted lines. Fold card in half and paste with a glue stick (Fold 1). Fold in half again to make your own personal wallet card (Fold 2).

My Emergency Card

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Home Phone: _____

Emergency Contacts:

Name	Relationship	Phone

(FOLD 2)

Emergency Numbers

Family Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

Local Clinic/Hospital: _____

Phone: _____

Fire Department: _____

Local Police Department: _____

Front

(FOLD 1)

Do you have any of the following conditions?

Heart disease ☐ Yes ☐ No

Previous heart attack ☐ Yes ☐ No

High blood pressure ☐ Yes ☐ No

High blood cholesterol ☐ Yes ☐ No

Diabetes ☐ Yes ☐ No

Other _____

List current medications, known allergies, and any other information.

Current medications: _____

Known allergies: _____

Other information: _____

Back

Section 3: Help Your Heart! Control Your High Blood Pressure

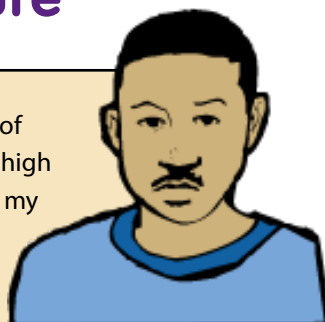


Help Your Heart! Control Your High Blood Pressure

Did you know that controlling your blood pressure can lower your chances of a heart attack or stroke? This section will show you how to prevent or control high blood pressure.

Darnell Harris Learns Important Facts About Blood Pressure

Darnell: “The doctor said that I have a blood pressure of 145/92. The numbers were my only warning that I had high blood pressure. I did not have any symptoms. Getting my blood pressure checked was easy and did not hurt.”



What Is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of your arteries. Blood pressure is needed to move the blood through your body so that blood can get to all parts of the body's organs.

Why Is High Blood Pressure Dangerous?

High blood pressure—also called hypertension—puts you at risk for heart disease. When your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder. High blood pressure is known as the “silent killer” because it has no symptoms. If not treated, high blood pressure raises your chances of:

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Kidney problems
- Eye problems
- Death



Blood Pressure Numbers

Blood pressure is given as two numbers. The systolic number (as the heart beats) is on top. The diastolic number (as the heart relaxes between beats) is on the bottom. For example, 120/80 is expressed verbally as “120 over 80.”



Know Your Blood Pressure Numbers

- Have your blood pressure checked by a health care provider at least once each year. It is quick, easy, and painless.



- If you have high blood pressure, it should be checked more often at your doctor’s office, neighborhood clinic, or a health fair.
- Keep track of your numbers using the “My Heart Health Card” on page 69.

The chart below shows normal, prehypertension, and high blood pressure numbers. Look at the chart below to see where you fit in.

Level	Blood Pressure Numbers	Results
Normal	Below 120/80	Good for you! Check your blood pressure once a year.
Prehypertension	120/80 to 139/89	You are more likely to end up with high blood pressure. Take action to prevent it.
High	140/90 and above	Ask your doctor how to lower it. Check your blood pressure often.

The Harris Family Takes Five Steps To Prevent or Control Blood Pressure

This family plan can help you prevent high blood pressure. If you already have high blood pressure, it can help you lower it. Check two or three things that you will do. Add more things over time.

1. Cut down on sodium.

Read these Nutrition Facts labels to compare the amount of sodium in food.

- Choose foods that have 5 percent or less of the Daily Value for sodium.
- Limit foods with 20 percent or more of the Daily Value for sodium.
- Limit your sodium intake to 2,300 milligrams (mg) or less per day.



Read the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods lower in sodium. Compare these Nutrition Facts labels on regular soup and reduced-sodium soup.

Which would you choose? _____

Reduced-Sodium Soup

Calories 90	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 210mg	9%

Regular Soup

Calories 190	Calories from Fat 70
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 4g	20%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 820mg	34%

The regular soup has almost four times more sodium than the reduced-sodium soup.

2. Eat heart healthy foods.

Each day cut back a little on the amount of sodium in your foods.

- Buy fruits and vegetables for snacks instead of salty chips and crackers.
- Buy fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added canned vegetables.



- Choose fewer processed and canned foods like hot dogs, sausage, bacon, bologna, ham, corned beef hash, and scrapple.
- Season foods with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Rinse canned vegetables to reduce the amount of sodium.
- Use reduced-sodium bouillon cubes, soy sauce, and ketchup.
- Take the saltshaker off the table.



Ms. Diane's Seasoning Recipe

Fill the saltshaker with these herbs and spices, and use it instead of salt to flavor foods.

2 tablespoons black pepper	1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon cayenne pepper	1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon paprika	1 bay leaf, ground



3. Limit alcohol.

Having more than three drinks a day can raise blood pressure.

- Men who drink should have no more than two drinks a day.
- Women who drink should have no more than one drink a day.
- Pregnant and breast-feeding women should not drink any alcohol.



4. Watch your weight.

- Take steps to lose weight if you are overweight.
- Eat smaller portions—do not go back for a second serving.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day, and slowly increase to 60 minutes.



5. Take your medicines.

- If you have high blood pressure, take your medicines the way your doctor tells you.
- Do not share medicines with friends or family.
- If you cannot afford your medicine, let your doctor know. There may be programs to help you buy your medicine.
- Use notes and other reminders to take your medicine. Ask your family to help you with reminder phone calls.
- When you go to the doctor, take all of your medicine bottles with you.



Your health and your family's health are priceless.

Make an investment in it!

Questions to ask the doctor about high blood pressure medicine:

Name of medicine(s): _____

Amount of medicine to take: _____

When to take it: _____

What to eat or drink with it: _____

If you can take other medicines safely at the same time: ☐ yes ☐ no

If problems occur,
call this number immediately: _____



My Plan To Prevent or Control High Blood Pressure

Check two or three things you will do. Add more things over time.

1. Add spice—not salt—to your life.

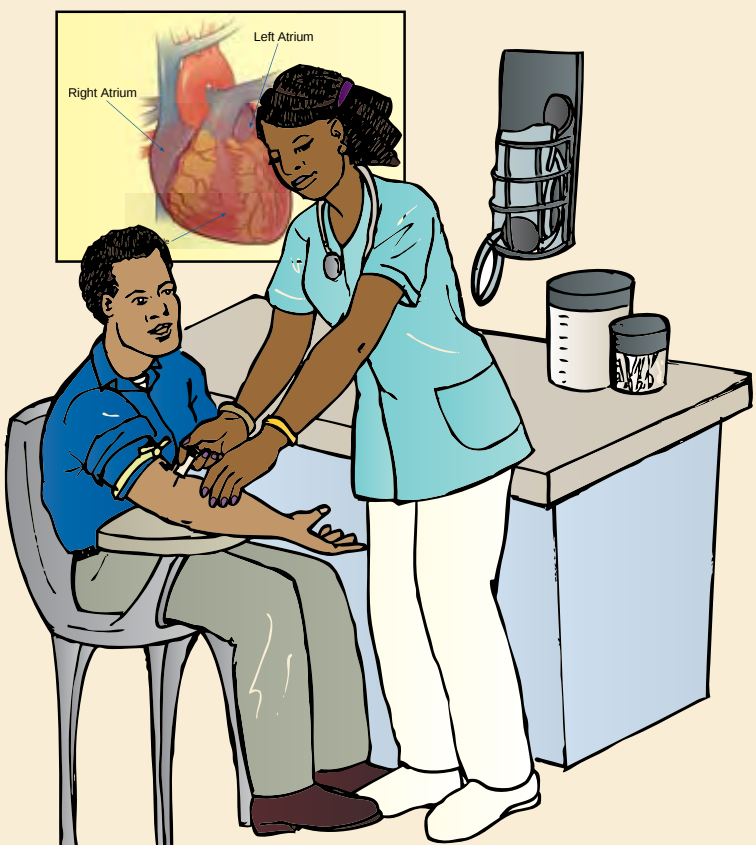
- ☐ Season foods with herbs and spices like garlic, black pepper, oregano, and onion instead of salt.
- ☐ Eat more fruits and vegetables instead of salty snacks.

2. Take heart. Try to:

- ☐ Lose weight if you are overweight.
- ☐ Eat smaller portions—do not go back for a second serving.
- ☐ Get 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.
- ☐ Limit alcohol.

3. If you have high blood pressure:

- ☐ Have your blood pressure checked often.
- ☐ Take your medications the way your doctor tells you.



Be Heart Smart! Keep Your Cholesterol in Check

Choosing foods lower in saturated fat and cholesterol can reduce your risk of heart disease. This section will help you learn how to lower or maintain your blood cholesterol levels.

Pam Harris Learns About Blood Cholesterol

Pam: “I have learned that eating foods lower in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol can reduce blood cholesterol level, reduce weight, and prevent heart disease.”

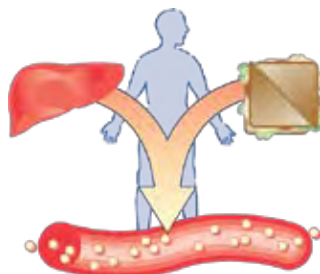


What Is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body.

Why Is High Blood Cholesterol Bad for Your Heart?

Your body makes all the cholesterol you need to be healthy. When you eat foods high in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol, your body can make too much cholesterol. Over time, this extra cholesterol can clog your arteries. The higher your blood cholesterol, the greater your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.



What Is Good and Bad Cholesterol?

HDL is “good cholesterol.” It helps clean fat and cholesterol from your blood vessels. Just remember the **H** in HDL for **H**ealthy, and the **H**igher it is, the better.

LDL is “bad cholesterol.” It carries cholesterol to your blood vessels, clogging them like rust in a pipe. Remember the **L** in LDL for **L**ousy, and the **L**ower it is, the better.



Have Your Blood Cholesterol Checked

The blood test to measure the cholesterol levels is called a lipid profile. You can get this test done at your doctor's office. If you are 20 years of age or older, check your cholesterol at least every 5 years. Your doctor may test you more often if your cholesterol levels are high.



Learn What Your Cholesterol Levels Mean

Total cholesterol:

- Less than 200—Ideal. Good for you!
- 200 to 239—Borderline. Be alert!
- 240 or more—High. Danger!

LDL (bad) cholesterol:

- Keep it low!
- Less than 100 mg/dL is ideal.

HDL (good) cholesterol:

- The higher the better!
- Keep it 40 mg/dL or more.

You can make changes in what you eat. This will help you keep your blood cholesterol at normal levels.



Less Than
200



200 to
239



240
or more

The Harris Family Takes Four Steps To Keep Their Cholesterol in Check

1. Cut back on foods high in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol.



Start making healthy changes a few at a time.

Be Heart Smart: Watch For These Fats

Saturated fat and *trans* fat are fats that raise blood cholesterol levels the most.

Saturated fat is found in foods such as high-fat meat, cheese, milk, and butter.

Trans fat is found in foods such as vegetable shortening, stick margarine, fried foods, and baked products (cookies, crackers, pies, and pastries).

Stay away from these fats. Know where they hide. Read the Nutrition Facts label.

Eat more of these foods:

- Fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Fish*
- Turkey and chicken without skin
- Lean cuts of meat
- Beans and lentils

Cut back on these foods:

- Whole milk, cheese, and ice cream
- Butter and stick margarine
- Fatty cuts of meat like beef oxtails, liverwurst, and pork chops
- Sausages, hotdogs, and bologna
- Liver, chitterlings, and other organ meats
- Egg yolks (no more than four per week)
- Lard, fatback, bacon grease, and coconut oil
- Fried foods, such as chicken, fish, shrimp, and french fries

*Pregnant and nursing mothers: Talk to your health care provider to find out the types of fish you can eat that are lower in mercury. Mercury may be harmful for your baby.



2. Read the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods lower in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol.

Compare the Nutrition Facts labels for an English muffin and a doughnut.

Which would you choose? _____

English Muffin

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 muffin (57g)	
Servings Per Container 6	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 130	Calories from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 290mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 4g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 15%	Iron 8%

Doughnut

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 doughnut (85g)	
Servings 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 300	Calories from Fat 140
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 16g	24%
Saturated Fat 4g	20%
Trans Fat 5g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 130mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 38g	13%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 22g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 8%	Iron 8%

The doughnut is higher in saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol.

3. Be physically active for 30 to 60 minutes on most days.
4. Aim for a healthy weight. Lose weight if you are overweight.



What Are Triglycerides?

Triglycerides are another type of fat in the blood. When your triglycerides are high, it can raise your risk for heart disease.

These steps can help you control your triglyceride level:

A healthy triglyceride level is less than 150 mg/dL.

- Quit smoking.
- Limit foods and beverages that are high in sugar.
- Limit alcohol.
- Control your weight.
- Be physically active.

Pam: "The doctor told me my triglyceride level is 300 mg/dL. This is twice as high as the normal value. I cut back on sweets and soda. I drink less alcohol."



What Is Metabolic Syndrome?

Having metabolic syndrome increases your chances of developing heart disease or stroke. It also increases your risk for diabetes.

Do You Have Metabolic Syndrome?

Pam: "My doctor told me that I have metabolic syndrome. Five risk factors make up this syndrome and can cause trouble for your heart. My doctor said that you only need three of the five risk factors to have metabolic syndrome. I am working with my doctor to beat it."



If you have three or more of these risk factors, you have metabolic syndrome.

Check the risk factors you have:

- High waist measurement
 - ☐ Greater than 35 inches for women
 - ☐ Greater than 40 inches for men
- High triglyceride level of 150 mg/dL or more
- Low HDL (good) cholesterol level
 - ☐ Less than 50 mg/dL for women
 - ☐ Less than 40 mg/dL for men
- Blood pressure of 130/85 mmHg or more
- High fasting blood sugar of 100 mg/dL or more



If you have three or more of these risk factors, talk to your doctor about metabolic syndrome.

My Family Plan To Lower Blood Cholesterol Levels

Check the steps you plan to take to lower your blood cholesterol and keep it low. Start with a few changes and add more over time.

- ☐ Get my cholesterol level checked.
- ☐ Talk to my doctor about what my cholesterol numbers mean.
- ☐ Read Nutrition Facts labels to choose healthier foods.
- ☐ Bake, boil, or broil foods instead of frying.
- ☐ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- ☐ Aim for a healthy weight. Lose weight if overweight.
- ☐ Do 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.
- ☐ Choose water or sugar-free beverages instead of soda.

Section 5: Embrace Your Health! Aim for a Healthy Weight



Embrace Your Health!

Aim for a Healthy Weight

Did you know that losing even a small amount of weight can lessen weight-related health problems? This section will discuss healthy ways to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

Tina: “My whole family has gained weight because we eat too much and are not physically active. The doctor told me that being overweight affects my health and my heart. My family and I will lose the extra pounds.”



Tina says she and her family gained weight because:

“Our family sits in front of the TV and the computer for long hours. We snack even after having a large dinner.”

“The kids sit for hours. They watch TV, play video games, and use the computer.”

“I don’t have time or energy to go for a walk.”

“We eat at places where the food is cheaper. We order large cheeseburgers, french fries, and sodas.”



Does Tina’s family sound like yours? If so, it’s time to make some healthy changes.

Do You Know if You Need To Lose Weight?

Your body mass index (BMI) and waist measurement can show you if you need to lose weight. Follow the steps below to find your BMI and waist measurement.

1. Find out if your weight is healthy.

In the BMI chart below, mark the square where your height and weight cross. The color of the square will show you if you are a healthy weight, overweight, or obese.

Body Mass Index (BMI) Chart

	Healthy Weight						Overweight						Obese					
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	
Height	Weight (in pounds)																	
4'10"	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	
4'11"	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	
5'0"	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179	
5'1"	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	
5'2"	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191	
5'3"	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197	
5'4"	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	
5'5"	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	
5'6"	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216	
5'7"	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	
5'8"	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	
5'9"	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	
5'10"	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	
5'11"	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	
6'0"	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	256	
6'1"	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	
6'2"	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	
6'3"	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	
6'4"	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	

Guide to a Healthy Weight

Body mass index can be used to indicate if you are overweight or obese. Height and weight are used to find your BMI on this chart.

- You have a healthy weight if your BMI is 18.5 to 24.9.
- You are overweight if your BMI is 25 or higher.
- You are obese if your BMI is 30 or higher.

My weight is:

- ☐ **Healthy:** I will keep this weight.
- ☐ **Overweight:** I will take steps to lose weight.
- ☐ **Obese:** I will ask my doctor or a registered dietitian for help to lose weight.



2. Measure your waist.

Measure your waist by placing a measuring tape snugly around your waist.

Write down your waist measurement. _____

Your waist measurement is high if:

- Women—Your waist measurement is more than 35 inches.
- Men—Your waist measurement is more than 40 inches.

My waist measurement is: ☐ Healthy ☐ High

A high waist measurement increases your risk for heart disease.

If your waist measurement is high, take steps to lose weight.

How To Start Your Family Plan To Lose Weight

Remember:

If you are overweight or obese, losing about 10 pounds can help you lower your risk for heart disease.

Lose weight slowly, about 1 to 2 pounds a week.

- Pick a day to begin.
- Change one thing at a time.
- Make the changes slowly. Stick to them.

Try These Steps To Lose Weight

1. Choose and prepare foods in a heart healthy way.

- Choose fat-free milk or low-fat (1%) milk and cheese.
- Eat fruits and vegetables without sauces.
- Prepare vegetables with light margarine instead of butter or cream sauces.
- Drink water or other calorie-free drinks instead of regular soda.



- Go easy on fruit juices because they are high in calories and sugar.
- Try to eat fruit more often than you drink juice and you will also get more fiber.
- Eat lean cuts of meat and fish.*
- Eat low-fat and no-added-sugar ice cream and yogurt.
- Bake, broil, or grill foods instead of frying.
- Cook without meat fat or lard.

*Pregnant and nursing mothers: Talk to your health care provider to find out the types of fish you can eat that are lower in mercury. Mercury may be harmful for your baby.



2. Read the Nutrition Facts labels to choose foods lower in calories and sugar.

Compare the Nutrition Facts for water and regular soda.
Which would you choose? _____

Water

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 bottle (12 fl oz)	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 0	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 0%

Regular Soda

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 can (12 fl oz)	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 140	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 50mg	2%
Total Carbohydrate 39g	13%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 39g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 0%

Regular soda has 140 calories and 39 grams of sugar.
The water has no calories or sugar.

3. Limit your portion size.

- Eat more fruits and vegetables with your meals.
- Eat small meals and healthy snacks throughout the day instead of one big meal.



- When eating out:
 - Split a main dish with a friend.
 - Order two small side orders, such as a half sandwich and salad instead of a large entree.
 - Divide your main dish in half as soon as you get it. Ask the waiter to wrap the other half “to go.”

4. Say “Yes” to physical activity.

Physical activity helps you improve your heart health, reduce stress, and feel better. Make it your answer to feeling tired, bored, and out of shape. Follow the steps below to get started.

1. Set your goal.
Start slowly and work your way up.

2. Do your favorite moderate physical activity for 30 to 60 minutes on most days.

If you are short on time, divide it up. For example, walk for 20 minutes three times a day.

3. Write down the activities you plan to do.



Examples of Moderate and Vigorous Activities

Moderate Activities

You may breathe harder, or your heart may beat faster. You should still be able to talk with a friend.

- Brisk walking
- Dancing
- Lifting weights
- Riding a stationary bike

Vigorous Activities

You may breathe harder, or your heart may beat very fast. It will be hard to talk with a friend at the same time.

- Doing aerobic exercises
- Jumping rope
- Playing sports
- Using the treadmill



Are You Ready To Begin?

- You can start physical activity slowly **if you do not have a health problem.**
- **If you have a health problem,** check with your doctor before starting physical activity.



Celebrate in a Healthy Way With Your Family

Tina: “I have a big family, and we get together often. Now, I prepare healthier food to bring to the gatherings. I encourage everyone to dance or play sports when we get together. I want my family to follow a healthy path.”

Try Tina’s family tips for family gatherings:

- **Don’t go to family gatherings hungry.** Eat a heart healthy snack before you leave home.
- **Bring a heart healthy dish to share.** Prepare a tasty dish with lots of vegetables.
- **Cut down on calories and high-fat foods.** Eat more vegetables and fruits instead of fried foods.
- **Watch your portions.** Go for small portions and eat slowly.
- **Take the focus off food.** Dance, jump rope, or play sports, such as basketball or football. Plan activities for the kids like hide-and-seek, tag, or dodgeball.

Check Three Things You Will Do To Help You Lose Weight

- ☐ Get up 15 minutes earlier to eat breakfast at home. Include fruit, whole-grain bread, and fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.

- ☐ Prepare a heart healthy lunch the night before. Include fruits, vegetables, and small portions of leftovers.



- ☐ Take a piece of fruit for a snack at work.

- ☐ Eat smaller portions at dinner. Eat vegetables every night or have a salad with low-calorie dressing.



- ☐ Drink water instead of soda or other drinks high in calories and sugar.



- ☐ Get active at work, at home, and in your spare time. Walk with your family or a friend.



Find Help

- Ask for help from the doctor and dietitian if you need to lose weight.
- Find out if your community has heart health classes taught by community health workers. If so, join the classes.



Pass On the Gift

When you maintain a healthy weight, you are also setting an example of heart healthy living for your children and the youth in your community. Pass on the gift of healthy living and long life to future generations.



Section 6: Protect Your Heart: Take Good Care of Your Diabetes for Life



Protect Your Heart: Take Good Care of Your Diabetes for Life

Preventing or controlling diabetes can lower your chances of heart disease, kidney disease, blindness, and dental problems. Did you know that by making simple lifestyle changes, such as being physically active, eating healthy foods, and losing weight if you are overweight, you can do a lot to prevent or control type 2 diabetes? This section will suggest ways to lower glucose levels or maintain healthy levels.

Ms. Diane Learns About Type 2 Diabetes

Ms. Diane: “Diabetes runs in my family. My brother and I have type 2 diabetes. I need to know more about it.”



What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes results when the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use it well. This causes high levels of blood glucose (blood sugar) to build up in your blood. Diabetes is a serious disease.

Why Is Diabetes Dangerous?

Diabetes is a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Over time, high blood glucose damages the body. Diabetes can lead to blindness, amputation, kidney problems, and death.

Types of Diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2. Type 1 diabetes happens when the body stops making insulin. Type 2 diabetes occurs when some insulin is made, but the body cannot use it well. Type 2 diabetes is more common.

You are more likely to get type 2 diabetes if you:

- Are overweight, especially if you have extra weight around your waist.
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes.
- Are African American, Latino, American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander.
- Have had diabetes while pregnant (gestational diabetes).
- Have given birth to a baby weighing 9 pounds or more.
- Have high blood pressure:
 - Your blood pressure is 140/90 mmHg or higher, or
 - A health care provider has told you that you have high blood pressure.
- Have cholesterol levels that are not normal:
 - Your HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol) is 35 mg/dL or lower, or
 - Your triglyceride level is 250 mg/dL or higher.
- Are physically active fewer than three times a week.



People with diabetes may develop symptoms slowly or may not have symptoms at all.

Symptoms of diabetes may include:



Sores that don't heal



Blurry vision



"Pins and needles"
feeling in the feet



Feeling irritable



Increased hunger



Very dry skin



Feeling tired



Frequent urination



Increased thirst

Ms. Diane: "The doctor told my daughter, Tina, that she has prediabetes. Her fasting blood sugar was 120 mg/dL, and she is also overweight. We worked together to change our habits. I do not want her to develop diabetes like me."



What Is Prediabetes?

Prediabetes is a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to have diabetes. People with prediabetes are likely to develop diabetes. If you have prediabetes, you can take these steps to prevent diabetes:

- Eat foods lower in fat and calories.
- Aim for a healthy weight. Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Be physically active on most days.



Have Your Blood Glucose Checked

Your doctor can test your fasting blood glucose.

Check the chart on page 69 to see if your blood glucose level is normal.

Tina's glucose level is 120 mg/dL.

She has prediabetes.



What Are the ABCs of Diabetes Control?

- **A is for the A1C test.** This test measures how your blood glucose has been for the last 3 months. It lets you know if your blood glucose has been under control. Get this test done at least twice a year.

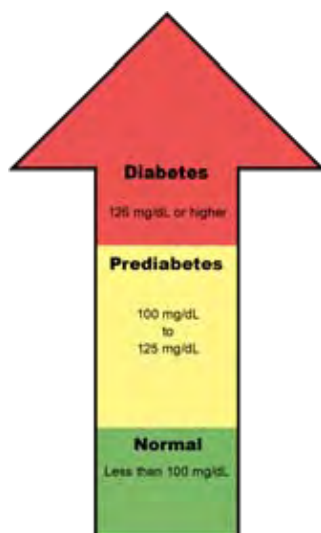
Number to aim for: Less than 7 percent

- **B is for blood pressure.** The higher your blood pressure, the harder your heart has to work. Get your blood pressure checked at every doctor's visit.

Numbers to aim for: Below 120/80 mmHg

- **C is for cholesterol.** “Bad” cholesterol, or LDL, builds up and clogs your arteries. Get your blood cholesterol tested at least once a year.

Number to aim for: Below 100 mg/dL



Be Sure To Ask Your Doctor:

- What are my A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers?
- If the numbers are not normal, what actions should I take to lower my ABC numbers?
- How can I find a local diabetes program for education and support?



If you have prediabetes or diabetes, it is important to work with a team of health care providers, such as a doctor, diabetes educator, and registered dietitian. Learn how to take care of your ABCs and empower yourself.

Lose a Little. Win a Lot.

Tina: "I am taking steps now to control my diabetes. I check my glucose levels daily. I also walk every day for 40 minutes, and I eat smaller portions. I have lost 8 pounds."



Ms. Diane's Family Plan To Prevent or Control Diabetes

- **Get 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.**

- Walk with your family or a friend.
- Dance to your favorite music.
- Lift hand weights, stretch, or ride an exercise bike while you watch TV.



- **Eat less sodium, saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sugar.**

- Season food with spices instead of salt.
- Trim the fat off meat and the skin off chicken.
- Bake, broil, or grill instead of frying.
- Use a small amount of vegetable oil instead of lard or butter.
- Cut down on sausage, bacon, and fried foods.
- Drink water and sugar-free beverages.



■ **Eat more fiber.**

- Choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans.
- Add fruit to your lunch.
- Add vegetables and beans to soups and casseroles.



■ **Stay at a healthy weight. Lose weight if you are overweight.**

- Eat smaller portions—do not go back for a second serving.
- Drink water or other calorie-free drinks.



■ **If you smoke, stop.**

- Ask your doctor, family, or friends to help you quit smoking.



- **If you already have diabetes, add these steps to control your diabetes.**
 - Check your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels as the doctor tells you.
 - Take medicines as the doctor tells you, even when you feel fine.
 - Ask your doctor about taking aspirin to prevent a heart attack.
 - Check your feet every day. Check for cuts, bruises, red areas, or swelling.
 - Brush your teeth and use dental floss every day.
 - See your eye doctor once a year, or more often if you have eye problems.
 - Find support to help you handle stress.



Take Action: Check the Steps You Will Take To Prevent or Control Diabetes

- ☐ Find out if I have diabetes.
- ☐ Get my blood glucose level checked.
- ☐ Get my blood pressure checked.
- ☐ Get my blood cholesterol checked.
- ☐ If I have diabetes, get my A1C checked twice a year.
- ☐ Lose weight if I am overweight. Losing 10 pounds will help my heart.
- ☐ Be physically active for 30 to 60 minutes on most days.
- ☐ Eat foods lower in fat and calories.
- ☐ Take the “My Heart Health Card” to my next doctor’s appointment. Be sure to have it filled out.



Section 7: Take Control of Your Health: Enjoy Living Smoke Free



Take Control of Your Health: Enjoy Living Smoke Free

If you smoke, quitting will be one of the most important steps you take to improve your health. This section will give you suggestions on how to quit smoking.

Darnell Harris Tells Us What He Learned Before He Quit Smoking

Darnell: “I knew that smoking was bad for my health, but I did not want to quit. My father smoked cigarettes every day. When he died of a heart attack, I decided that I needed to stop. His death gave me the willpower to quit smoking.”



Why Quit Smoking?

Improve your family's well-being:

- Enjoy a longer and healthier life with your children and grandchildren.
- Breathe easier.
- Have more energy.
- Save the money now used to buy cigarettes.
- Set a good example for your children.

Look and smell better:

- Get rid of bad breath.
- Have fresh-smelling clothes and hair.
- Lose yellow stain on teeth and fingers.
- Prevent wrinkles.

How Does Smoking Affect Your Health?

Cigarettes contain more than 4,000 chemicals, and many of them are poisonous. The poisonous chemicals in cigarettes can lead to:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Lung disease



How Does Smoking Affect the Health of Your Loved Ones?

- Children exposed to cigarette smoke may have more:
 - Asthma attacks
 - Bronchitis
 - Ear infections



- Family members exposed to cigarette smoke may develop:

- Heart and lung problems
- Stroke
- Cancer

- Smoking during pregnancy increases the chances that your baby will be born sick.



What Should You Expect When You Quit Smoking?

Nicotine is a powerful drug that causes addiction. Your body gets used to the nicotine in cigarettes. When you stop smoking, getting rid of the nicotine in your body can make you feel sick. Tell your doctor that you are trying to quit smoking. There are medicines that can help you feel better.



How Does It Feel When You Begin To Quit Smoking?

Some people may have headaches and feel cranky and tired. This happens when the body tries to get rid of the nicotine.



The good news is:

- Most symptoms go away in about 4 weeks.
- Quitting smoking is not easy but many people are able to quit for good.
- If you smoke again, quit again. It may take many attempts to stay off cigarettes.

Follow Darnell's Example To Quit Smoking for Good

Darnell: "I chose my father's birthday as my quit date. I got help from my family and my friends. The doctor and a health educator also helped me. When I quit, they congratulated me on my success."



Tips That Helped Darnell Quit Smoking

1. Get ready.

- Pick a day to quit smoking.
- Write down the reasons you want to quit smoking. Put the list where you will see it every day.
- Throw away all cigarettes, lighters, and ashtrays. Don't buy any more cigarettes.
- Tell your family, friends, and coworkers the day you are quitting smoking.
- Make a list of the persons who will support you.

2. Make a plan to stay off cigarettes.

- Don't go to places that make you want to smoke.
- At parties, try not to be around friends who smoke.
- When someone offers you a cigarette, say, "No, thank you. I don't smoke." You will soon see yourself as a nonsmoker.



3. Ask for help.

- Buy nicotine gum or skin patches, or ask your doctor for a prescription for medicine that will help you stay off cigarettes.
- Find a local program to help you quit smoking.



Darnell Resists the Urge To Smoke

Try These Tips To Resist the Urge To Smoke

- **Keep your hands busy:**
 - Do arts and crafts.
 - Garden.
 - Start a project around the house.
 - Read.

Darnell: "In the beginning, I was stressed and craved a cigarette. Instead of lighting up a cigarette, I called the 'Quit Smoking' help line. They suggested I chew sugarless gum and listen to music to help decrease the urge. It worked."



■ **Put something in your mouth that is not a cigarette:**

- Drink water.
- Chew sugarless gum.
- Eat vegetable sticks or apple slices.
- Chew on a short straw or a toothpick.



■ **If you are stressed, angry, tired, or nervous:**

- Take a slow, deep breath, count to five, and release it. Repeat 10 times.
- Talk with a friend.
- Take a walk.
- Listen to music.



- **When you get up in the morning:**
 - Brush your teeth and use mouthwash, instead of smoking.
 - If you've always had a cigarette with your coffee, switch to tea for a while or drink water.

Darnell's Family Is Living Smoke Free

Darnell: "When friends come to our house and light up say politely that our house is smoke free, and they need to smoke outside."



Learn From Darnell's Family:

1. Help your children stay smoke free.

- Talk to your children about the harm smoking does to their health.
- Help your children make a sign that says, "We are happy to be a smoke-free family."

2. Protect your family and friends from secondhand smoke.

- Put a "Thank You for Not Smoking" sticker or sign in your house and car.
- Sit in a nonsmoking section in restaurants.



My Plan To Quit Smoking

Write down the reasons you want to quit smoking. Here are some examples:

- To improve my health
- To protect my family
- To have more energy
- To save money

Reasons I want to quit smoking:

Write down the steps you plan to take to quit smoking. For example, you might:

- **Set a quit date.**

My quit date is: _____

Ask family and friends to help you.

Names: _____

- **Find a local program to help you quit smoking.**

- **Make a list of things to do when you get the urge to smoke.**

My Heart Health Card

Use this card to record the results of your tests. Take action to keep your heart healthy.

♥ = Normal values

Name: _____

Weight	Date				
	Result				
BMI ♥ 18.5 to 24.9	Date				
	Result				
Waist Measurement ♥ Men—40 inches or less ♥ Women—35 inches or less	Date				
	Result				
Blood Pressure ♥ Less than 120/80 mmHg	Date				
	Result				
Tests to measure “fats” in the blood					
Total Cholesterol ♥ Less than 200 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
LDL ♥ Less than 100 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
HDL ♥ 40 mg/dL or more	Date				
	Result				
Triglycerides ♥ Less than 150 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
Tests to check sugar in blood for diabetes					
Blood Glucose ♥ Fasting—less than 100 mg/dL	Date				
	Result				
A1C ♥ Less than 7%	Date				
	Result				
Other	Date				
	Result				

For More Information

The NHLBI Information Center is a service of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health. The Information Center provides information to health professionals, patients, and the public about the treatment, diagnosis, and prevention of heart, lung, and blood diseases. Please contact the Information Center for prices and availability of publications.

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Selected publications are also available on the NHLBI
Web site at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.



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