

How can high blood pressure and diabetes damage my heart?



Making changes can help protect your heart

High blood pressure and diabetes make it hard for your heart to work properly. When you have both, you are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Over time, you are also more likely to have heart failure. This means the heart muscle becomes weak and cannot pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. The steps you take now to manage both high blood pressure and diabetes can help protect your heart in the future.

- **Aim for a healthy weight.** Losing *as little as 10 pounds* can help lower blood pressure and control blood sugar
- **Be active.** Try for at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day. You could choose to do 15 minutes in both the morning and at night. Work with your doctor to plan an exercise program that is safe for you
- **Eat less fat.** For example, cut back on fried foods and creamy sauces. And eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy foods, such as skim milk

- **Take your medicines every day as your doctor tells you.** You may be taking different types of medicines, such as medicine to control blood pressure, lower cholesterol level, or control blood sugar. Be sure you know how and when to take each one. If you have questions, ask your doctor
- **If you smoke, stop.** Smoking also damages the blood vessels. Ask your doctor for help to stop smoking

Try not to do everything all at once. Ask your doctor which changes you can start with. Then, set small goals. Tackle them one at a time. For each change you make, know that you are helping to protect your heart.

Talk to your doctor
about how to manage
your high blood
pressure and diabetes.