



908-273-4300



Cardiology Doctor Discussion Guide

It is important to talk with your doctor about your cardiovascular health. Your cardiologist can tell you about your risk, if you should be screened for cardiovascular problems, and whether you might need treatment.

It can sometimes be difficult to ask your doctor questions. You also might think of questions at home that you would forget to ask when you are at your cardiology appointment. If you are like many people who would benefit from having a list of questions, you may print this **Doctor Discussion Guide** and take it to your appointment.

Use the section at the bottom to write additional questions or make notes about recommendations your doctor might have for weight loss, stopping smoking, exercise, diet, or other things you should do to protect your cardiovascular health.

Risk

- What are my risk factors for cardiovascular disease?
- What can I do to reduce my risk?

If You are Overweight

- Does weight loss really make a difference to my cardiovascular health?
- How much weight would I need to lose to improve my cardiovascular health?
- Can you recommend a program that can help me lose and maintain a healthy weight?

If You Have High Blood Pressure

- What is a healthy blood pressure for me?
- At what level should I be concerned?
- Are there medications that can help me maintain a healthy blood pressure?
- In addition to taking my medication each day as prescribed, what things can I do to improve my blood pressure?
- How often should I have an electrocardiogram?
- If my blood pressure is too high, should I have my kidney function tested?
- How often should my blood pressure be checked?
- Should I monitor my blood pressure at home? If so, can you recommend a reliable blood pressure monitoring device?
- Can I check my blood pressure at a pharmacy? If so, would a pharmacist be willing to assist me?

If You Have Diabetes

- How often should I check my blood sugar?
- Should I monitor my blood sugar at home? If so, how often should I check it?

- Can you recommend a reliable home blood sugar monitoring device?
- Are there medications I can take to reduce my blood sugar?
- Would losing weight help me better control my blood sugar?
- How much weight would I need to lose to improve my blood sugar and protect my cardiovascular system?
- How often should I have my eyes checked?
- How often should I have my kidney function checked?
- Did you check the pulses in my feet?
- Am I at risk for serious problems with my legs and feet?

If You Smoke

- Can you recommend a program or ways I can stop smoking to protect my cardiovascular system?
- If I stop smoking, how long does it take for my cardiovascular system to benefit?
- Are cigars, pipes, or marijuana better for my cardiovascular system than cigarettes?

If You Have Problems With Drinking or Recreational Drugs

- Can alcohol or recreational drugs affect my cardiovascular health?
- Can you recommend a program to help me stop drinking or using recreational drugs?

If You are Inactive

- How much exercise will help improve and maintain my cardiovascular health?
- What types of exercise are best for my heart, given my age, fitness, and lifestyle?
- Can you recommend ways I can get started exercising?

If You are Having Emotional Problems Such as Stress or Depression

- Can stress affect my cardiovascular health?
- What can I do to reduce stress?
- Can feeling down affect my cardiovascular health?
- Are there things I can do or is there a special doctor I should see to help improve my emotional health?

Important!

- Don't feel embarrassed to ask your cardiologist about anything that is troubling you about your health. Your cardiologist can only provide the care you need if you are honest about your complete medical history, including smoking, eating a poor diet, struggling with emotional problems, using alcohol or recreational drugs, or not taking your medications as prescribed
- Tell your cardiologist about any side effects you are experiencing
- Take **all** your medication bottles (including those your cardiologist and other physicians have prescribed for you) to your appointment or list them below with the proper dosing

Use this section to list any symptoms or other concerns you are having so that you can discuss them with your doctor.
