

Minnesota Department of Health

Cardiovascular Disease and Family Health History

Screening for Individuals Without a Family History

- ◆ Lipid screening beginning at age 20¹
- ◆ Blood pressure screening for adults 18 and older^{1,2}
- ◆ Risk factor assessment should begin at age 20. Risk factors, to be recorded at least every two years include, smoking status, diet, alcohol intake, physical activity, blood pressure, BMI, waist circumference, and pulse. A lipid profile and fasting blood glucose measurement should be made according to the patient's risk for hyperlipidemia and diabetes.³



¹ National Institutes of Health

² United States Preventive Services Task Force

³ American Heart Association

Screening for Individuals With a Family History

- ◆ Although there are no national guidelines for screening and treating individuals with a family history of cardiovascular disease, individuals with a family history of premature coronary heart disease (before 55 for men and before 65 for women) should be referred to medical care systems to determine the most appropriate screening and preventive measures.⁴
- ◆ Talk to your healthcare provider about your family health history to make a personalized plan to maintain your health.

⁴ Schuener MT. Clinical application of genetic risk assessment strategies for coronary artery disease: genotypes, phenotypes, and family history. *Primary Care* 2004;31(3):711-37.



What is a Family Health History?

A record of a person's current and past illnesses, and those of his or her parents, brothers, sisters, children, and other blood relatives. A family health history shows the pattern of certain diseases in a family, and helps to determine risk factors for those and other diseases.⁵

⁵ National Cancer Institute

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors and What You Can Do About Them

Things You Can Change

Obesity: Greater weight leads to greater risk.

Diet: A diet high in fat and calories and low in whole grains, vegetables, and fruits increases risk.

Exercise: An inactive lifestyle increases risk.

Stress: Increases risk

Smoking: A smokers' risk of developing coronary heart disease is 2-4 times that of non-smokers.⁶

Alcohol: Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure, and lead to stroke.⁶

Glucose intolerance or Diabetes: increases risk

Hypertension: Increases risk.

High cholesterol: Increases risk

⁶ <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=500>

Things You Can't Change

Family History: Children or siblings of individuals with cardiovascular disease are more likely to develop it themselves.⁶

Race/Ethnicity: African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and some Asian Americans have greater risk than Caucasians.

Age: Over 83% of people who die of coronary heart disease are 65 or older.⁶

Sex: Men have a greater risk of heart attack and earlier heart attacks than women.

What Can You Do If You Have A Family History?

- ◆ **Talk to your healthcare provider** about your family health history of cardiovascular disease
- ◆ **Make a plan to preserve your health**
- ◆ **Regular screening and risk assessment** by a healthcare provider
- ◆ **Engage in healthy behavior** (see left box)



What Can You Do?

- ◆ **Lose weight** if you are overweight.
- ◆ **Eat a balanced diet** including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and lean meats
- ◆ **Get active**
- ◆ **Quit smoking**
- ◆ **Drink a reasonable amount of alcohol**
- ◆ **Manage your stress levels**
- ◆ **Take your medications** to control high cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes



Your Family Health History...

**Know your past.
Act in the present.
Protect your future.**