

# Heart Health for People with Diabetes

If you have diabetes, you're at increased risk for heart attack or stroke.

## Your ABC Check List

*Talk to your doctor about your ABC numbers and what target numbers are right for you.*



### A A1C

The A1C test measures your average blood glucose (sugar) over the last 3 months. Having high levels of blood sugar for a long time can harm your blood vessels, kidneys, eyes, and feet.

**Healthy A1C: below 7**  
**Tested at least twice a year.**



### B Blood pressure

High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. It can cause a heart attack, stroke, and damage your kidneys and eyes.

**Healthy blood pressure for diabetics:**  
**Below 140/90\***  
**Get it checked at every doctor visit.**



### C Cholesterol

Bad cholesterol, or LDL, clogs your blood vessels which can cause a heart attack or stroke. HDL, or "good" cholesterol helps remove the "bad" cholesterol from your blood vessels.

**Healthy Cholesterol: Below 100 for LDL**  
**Get a cholesterol test at least once a year.**

# How can I control my ABC numbers?

Below are important things you can do to control your ABC numbers.



## Eat Well.

- Eat high-fiber foods like whole grain breads and cereals, brown rice, lentils, beans, fruits, and vegetables.
- Eat heart-healthy fats such as fish, nuts, seeds, and avocado.
- Eat less foods with high-trans or saturated fats, sugar and salt. Try skipping the salt or add less, and order a smaller size – like a kid’s size of French fries. Instead of frying, try baking, broiling, or grilling with oils instead of butter, cream, shortening, lard, or margarine.

## Get moving.

- Adults should get 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity at least 5 days a week. You can break up 30 minutes into smaller amounts of time throughout the day.
- You can get active without a gym membership! Walking, dancing, bike-riding, or tennis are all ways to get physical activity without going to a gym.

For more tips on healthy eating and physical activity, visit [www.mass.gov/massinmotion](http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion)

## Take your medicine following your doctor’s directions.

Keep taking your medicines until you talk to your doctor.

## Get help to deal with stress.

Ask for help if you feel down. Talk to a mental health counselor, a friend, family member or a religious or spiritual leader that you trust, and can listen to your concerns.

## Quit smoking.

For help quitting, call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** or visit [www.makesmokinghistory.org](http://www.makesmokinghistory.org)

## Do you know the signs of a heart attack?

Learn more about heart health, including the signs and symptoms of a heart attack, by visiting: [www.mass.gov/dph/heartstroke](http://www.mass.gov/dph/heartstroke)

To learn more about diabetes, visit [mass.gov/dph/diabetes](http://mass.gov/dph/diabetes)

