

# American Heart Association's List of Questions to Ask Your Doctor

## About blood cholesterol

- What do my cholesterol numbers mean? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is my goal cholesterol level? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often should I have my levels checked? \_\_\_\_\_
- How does exercise affect my cholesterol levels? \_\_\_\_\_
- What type of foods should I eat? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I need cholesterol-lowering medicine?     Yes     No \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will it take to reach my cholesterol goals? \_\_\_\_\_

## About diet after heart attack, stroke, or surgery

- What foods should I eat? \_\_\_\_\_
- What foods should I limit? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do I read food labels? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are some cooking tips for me? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about eating out? \_\_\_\_\_
- What can I eat at fast-food restaurants? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can I control the portions? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much salt may I eat? \_\_\_\_\_

## About drug treatment

- Will I need to take medicine?     Yes     No \_\_\_\_\_
- What kind of medicine should I take? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will my insurance cover this medication?     Yes     No \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I take the generic form of the medicine?     Yes     No \_\_\_\_\_
- What should I know about the medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the side effects? \_\_\_\_\_



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- How do I know if it's working? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can I remember when to take medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- What if I forget to take a medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- Should I avoid any foods or other medicines?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I drink alcohol?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will I need to take my medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I have to keep taking medicine?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

### About high blood pressure

- What should my blood pressure be? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are my options in controlling high blood pressure? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often should my blood pressure be checked? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about home blood pressure monitors? \_\_\_\_\_
- Should I use blood pressure machines at stores?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- How does exercise affect my blood pressure?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What's my daily sodium (or salt) limit? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there sodium in the medicine I take?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I need to take blood pressure medicine?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I always have to take medicine?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Why do I need to lose weight? \_\_\_\_\_

### About the hospital (before surgery or procedure)

- When do I check in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will happen before the (surgery, procedure)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How long will it take? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where can my family wait for me? \_\_\_\_\_
- What effects (temporary or permanent) will the surgery have on me? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the doctor's experience in performing this procedure? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What medicines will be prescribed (short term/long term)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- For how long will I have to rest at home after surgery? \_\_\_\_\_

### About a pacemaker or implanted defibrillator

- Does the shock hurt? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will my batteries last? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do I know if it's working? \_\_\_\_\_
- When can I take showers and baths? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I swim?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What equipment or devices should I avoid? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can my arrhythmia be cured?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

### About physical activity after stroke, heart attack or surgery

- Why is physical activity important? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I exercise?  Yes  No When? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I play sports?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the best types of activities for me? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much activity do I need? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I have sex?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

### About physical therapy and rehabilitation

- When do I start rehabilitation? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often should I go to rehab? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is it covered by my health insurance?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will I need therapy? \_\_\_\_\_
- What happens when my rehab program stops? \_\_\_\_\_

### About quitting cigarettes and tobacco

- What can I do to stop the cravings? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many minutes do cravings last? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about a nicotine patch or gum? \_\_\_\_\_
- After I quit, when will the urges stop? \_\_\_\_\_
- What if I start gaining weight? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can I keep from gaining weight? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can family and friends help? \_\_\_\_\_
- What if I slip and go back to tobacco? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will it take to reduce my risk? \_\_\_\_\_
- What do I do if a nicotine patch or gum doesn't work? \_\_\_\_\_

### About recovery at home (after heart attack, stroke or surgery)

- Can leaving the hospital cause mixed feelings?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I need special transportation or equipment?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Should I stay in bed?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- How much activity can I do? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can my family help me? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I get financial assistance?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I get emotional assistance?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I get in-home assistance for daily tasks?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What type of diet should I eat? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will my (aphasia, chest pains, weakness, etc.) go away?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- When should I call my doctor? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are my feelings normal?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What if I stay depressed? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I have sex?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- How soon can I drive? \_\_\_\_\_
- When can I go back to work? \_\_\_\_\_
- When should I schedule a visit to the doctor? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can I prevent another attack? \_\_\_\_\_
- What changes should I make in my lifestyle? \_\_\_\_\_

### About recovery in the hospital (after stroke, heart attack or surgery)

- What happens after surgery? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How soon can my family visit? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will there be pain or fever?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the ICU and CCU? \_\_\_\_\_
- What happens in the ICU and CCU? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What are the tubes and wires for? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I see the monitors?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What does it mean if an alarm goes off? \_\_\_\_\_
- What feelings can arise in the ICU? \_\_\_\_\_
- When will I leave the ICU? \_\_\_\_\_

- How long will the breathing tube stay in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What happens when I leave the ICU? \_\_\_\_\_
- What can be done to help in recovery? \_\_\_\_\_
- How soon can I get out of bed? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is a good sleeping position? \_\_\_\_\_
- When can I eat and drink? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about bathing? \_\_\_\_\_
- When will my (chest, head, neck, leg, etc.) heal? \_\_\_\_\_
- What about medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will the pain last? \_\_\_\_\_
- When do I start rehabilitation? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long do I stay in the hospital? \_\_\_\_\_
- What should my family know? \_\_\_\_\_

### About surgery or procedures

- Will I need surgery?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Why do I need it? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the surgery or procedure like? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How is it done? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the risks? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Could I have a stroke or heart attack during surgery?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the alternatives? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I need this procedure or surgery again?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What should my family know? \_\_\_\_\_

### About symptoms and warning signs

- How can I tell a heart attack from angina? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How is a heart attack different from a stroke? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How is a TIA different from a stroke? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What should I do if I have any of the symptoms of a stroke or heart attack? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where can I or someone in my family take a CPR class? \_\_\_\_\_

### About tests for heart or brain function

- Why do I need it? \_\_\_\_\_
- How is it done? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will it hurt?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What will the test show? \_\_\_\_\_
- How soon will I get the results? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is monitored during the test? \_\_\_\_\_
- What equipment is used? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there a risk?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Could it give me a heart attack or stroke?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the alternatives? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will my artificial heart valve cause problems?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Could my implanted pacemaker cause problems?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_
- Will I need more tests?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

### About weight control

- Why are weight control and physical activity important? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often should I check my weight? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much weight should I lose? \_\_\_\_\_
- How fast should I lose weight? \_\_\_\_\_
- What diet guidelines should I follow? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the best types of physical activities for me? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much physical activity do I need to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much weight gain is too much? \_\_\_\_\_
- How can family and friends help? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do I find a dietitian to help me develop a good, long-term weight-loss plan? \_\_\_\_\_

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