



INSIDE:
Your heart
action plan



Lifestyles for Heart Disease

Heart health: It's a numbers game

Learning you have heart disease can be rough, especially when your doctor tells you what you need to do: perhaps start exercising or eating better. Another important part of your care is to see your doctor regularly. Many things — such as cholesterol and blood pressure — are key indicators of your heart health. That's why making sure you monitor these is an important part of your care. Here's where to start.

Blood pressure

When you take a photograph, the snapshot captures a specific moment in time. But it doesn't show you what happened next. The same is true of blood pressure readings. It fluctuates throughout the day. A screening test performed by your doctor

depicts your blood pressure level only at that instant. Monitoring your blood pressure at home can help you manage it even better. The American Heart Association recommends charting your daily blood pressure readings to bring to each doctor appointment.

Cholesterol

Together, cholesterol and triglycerides are known as lipids. Your lipid levels can be checked with a simple blood test. When you have heart disease, this test helps your doctor measure how well your risk factors are controlled.

Body mass index

Your BMI compares your height to your weight, letting you know whether you're

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Get online nutritional counseling that can improve your eating habits — for life.

To get started:

- > Visit your plan's website.
- > Log in as a member.
- > Click on the *Health & Wellness* tab.
- > Click *BlueHealthConnection[®]*.
- > Click *My Digital Health Coaching* and then click *Nourish*.

considered healthy, overweight or obese. A BMI of more than 30 is considered obese. The easiest way to figure it out is to use the online BMI calculator. Log in to your plan's website as member. Click on *BlueHealthConnection[®]* and then *Tools and Media*. Then choose *Calculators*.

Managing blood pressure:

Small steps lead to big benefits

Being diagnosed with high blood pressure can seem overwhelming. There is a lot to learn and do. Before you get started, take a few deep breaths. Then, take it one step at a time.

Managing high blood pressure takes daily effort. But small changes in your daily habits can make a world of difference. Check out these suggestions from health experts:

- > **Try to add more potassium to your diet.** This nutrient may help keep your blood pressure in check. Foods such as bananas, lima beans, cantaloupe and dried apricots are packed with potassium.
- > **Check your weight.** If you're carrying too many pounds, make an effort to lose a few of them. To drop excess weight, try eating smaller portion sizes.
- > **Make your meals savory without all the salt.** Add flavor to carrots with cinnamon or rosemary, for example. Liven up green beans with dill or curry powder. Choose fresh meats, poultry and fish, rather than canned or processed types.
- > **Don't skip any of your blood pressure medicine.** Check your medicines and order any refills before they run out. Each time you get a refill at the pharmacy, jot a note on your calendar to order and pick up the medicine about a week before you run out.
- > **Aim to get at least 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week.** Try a brisk, 15-minute walk during lunch and another after dinner.
- > **If drinking alcohol, do so only in moderation.** Women should set the limit at one drink a day, while men shouldn't have more than two daily drinks.



EVERY YEAR, ask your doctor about these wellness checks. You may need some of them more than once a year.

- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ Total cholesterol (HDL, LDL, triglycerides)
- ✓ Flu shot
- ✓ Don't smoke. If you need help quitting, contact Quit the Nic at 1-800-811-1764. Hours of QTN are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Also, check with your doctor to see if your pneumonia shot is up to date.

CONNECT TO A NURSE

Want to talk to a BCN chronic condition management nurse? Now you can connect online by using our nurse callback form found at bcbsm.com/bcnccmreferral.





The ABCs of lowering your heart disease and stroke risk

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have set a nationwide goal to help prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. These agencies, with other federal and private-sector organizations, are using educational campaigns, health care technology and additional tools to take strides against stroke and heart disease.

Getting to the heart of the problem

Every year, more than 2 million Americans have a heart attack or stroke, and every day, more than 2,200 die from cardiovascular disease. Heart

disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death, respectively, in the U.S. The good news is that there are plenty of steps you can take to help prevent these conditions — and avoid becoming a statistic.

REACH OUT

Who knows more about living with heart disease than those facing the same daily issues as you? We'd love to share your feedback to help support and inspire other members living with heart disease. Just email us at bcnccm@bcbsm.com with any tips you'd like to share with other readers.



Know your ABCs



Appropriate aspirin therapy:

Aspirin can help people who have suffered a heart attack or stroke, and it may help even prevent these conditions. Experts advise people to discuss the benefits and risks of aspirin with their doctor.



Blood pressure control:

High blood pressure raises the risk for heart attack and stroke, as well as kidney failure, heart failure and other diseases. Since this condition usually causes no symptoms, people can have it for years without knowing it. Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Take steps to control it if it's high.



Cholesterol management:

High cholesterol also can lead to heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular problems. It, too, typically has no symptoms. Fortunately, managing cholesterol levels can slow, decrease or even stop plaque buildup in arteries, which lowers cardiovascular risks.



Smoking cessation:

The long list of health hazards linked to smoking includes heart disease, stroke, aneurysms and cancers. People of all ages can reap health benefits by quitting smoking.

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Health and wellness or prevention information

If you have questions about this program, have received this information in error, would prefer not to receive further information or want to inquire about resources for members with special needs, please call:

1-800-392-4247 | TTY callers dial 711

8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

For Customer Service, please call the number listed on the back of your ID card.



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HEALTHY LIVING



GOOD EATING

Tuscan Beans with Tomatoes and Oregano (Servings: 4)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15½ ounces) low-sodium chickpeas drained and rinsed
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, rinsed and halved
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, minced (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt-free seasoning blend
- 4 whole inner leaves of romaine lettuce, rinsed and dried

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine chickpeas (or garbanzo beans) and tomatoes.

In a small bowl, combine olive oil, vinegar, oregano, pepper and salt-free seasoning blend. Whisk until the ingredients blend into a thick sauce and the oil and vinegar no longer separate. Pour over the beans and tomatoes. Mix gently to coat.

Line four salad bowls with a romaine lettuce leaf. Top each leaf with one-fourth of the bean mixture.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER 1¼ CUPS SERVING: 265 calories; 10 g fat; 35 g carbs; 12 g protein; 0 mg cholesterol; 116 mg sodium.



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My heart action plan

Setting and reaching goals is an important part of your heart disease care. Your doctor is your partner in doing this. Take this form with you to your next appointment and talk to your doctor about your test results and personal goals. Check in with your doctor on your progress and ask him or her how often you should update this plan.

My personal goal	My results today	What I can do
Blood pressure: _____ By date: _____ <i>Target:</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Follow an eating plan from my doctor <input type="checkbox"/> Use only 1 teaspoon of salt per day (2,300 mg) <input type="checkbox"/> Take my blood pressure medicine as directed
LDL cholesterol: _____ _____ By date: _____ <i>Target:</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Follow a low-fat, low-cholesterol meal plan <input type="checkbox"/> Have a fasting cholesterol test at least every year <input type="checkbox"/> Take my cholesterol-lowering and heart medicines as directed
Amount of exercise: _____ _____ By date: _____ <i>Target: At least 30 minutes on most days</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Ask my doctor about an exercise program <input type="checkbox"/> Walk or _____ (another exercise) for _____ minutes, _____ days a week
BMI: _____ By date: _____ <i>Short-term target: Less than 30</i> <i>Long-term target: Between 19 and 24</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Make healthy food choices <input type="checkbox"/> Drink water every day
Tobacco use: _____ _____ By date: _____ <i>Target: No tobacco use</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> Join a smoking cessation program

(continued on next page)

My heart action plan *(continued)*

My personal goal	My results today	What I can do
<p>Alcohol use: _____</p> <p>By date: _____</p> <p><i>Target: No more than two drinks per day for men and no more than one drink per day for women</i></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Limit my alcohol use (A drink is one 12-ounce beer, 4 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits.)</p>
<p>Blood sugar (A1C): _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>By date: _____</p> <p><i>Target: Fasting blood sugar less than 110 and HbA1c less than 7 percent</i></p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Keep my daily blood sugar in a good range</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow my meal plan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a diabetes checkup with my doctor (HbA1c, eye and foot exams)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Take my diabetes medicines as directed</p>

This diabetes plan was created for:

Name

Date