



Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) is the leading cause of death in the U.S. for both men and women, and about 1 in 4 deaths each year are related to heart disease. ASCVD can occur when a fatty material, known as atherosclerotic plaque, builds up in the walls of arteries. As plaque builds, arteries narrow, which limit blood supply to the heart and other organs, creating a risk for heart attack and/or stroke.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that heart disease prevention should begin early in life, starting with an assessment of a patient's risk factors. The following are risk factors for developing heart disease, as outlined by the AHA:

RISK FACTORS:

- AGE
- GENDER
- FAMILY HISTORY
- RACE

MANAGEABLE RISK FACTORS:

- DIABETES
- OBESITY
- HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
- PHYSICAL INACTIVITY
- HIGH CHOLESTEROL
- SMOKING

(Including LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides)

- **LOW DENSITY LIPOPROTEIN (LDL) CHOLESTEROL:** LDL Cholesterol, known as “bad cholesterol” can slowly build up in the inner walls of arteries, causing them to narrow. Elevated levels of LDL indicate a greater risk of developing ASCVD.
- **HIGH DENSITY LIPOPROTEIN (HDL) CHOLESTEROL:** HDL Cholesterol, known as “good cholesterol”, help clear the “bad” cholesterol (LDL) from blood and reduce the risk of ASCVD. High levels of HDL can protect against a heart attack.
- **TRIGLYCERIDES:** Triglycerides are a type of blood lipid (fat). High levels of triglycerides are a component of metabolic syndrome, which is a combination of 5 risk factors for ASCVD and also includes high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, low HDL cholesterol, and obesity. Individuals with 3 or more of these risk factors fit the criteria for metabolic syndrome; consult your physician for further information.

If you identify with one or more of these factors, you may be at risk of heart disease.

Make an appointment with your physician to discuss appropriate diagnostic testing and how you can manage your risk.



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HEART HEALTH
PATIENT GUIDE:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PHYSICIAN

The AHA recommends that beginning at age 20, when plaque usually begins to develop, a basic lipid test be performed. A basic lipid test includes a measure of your total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol), LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) and triglycerides. In addition to a basic lipid test, Heart Health testing from BioReference provides an accurate picture of ASCVD risk by looking deeper into heart health numbers and testing for additional clinically relevant markers, such as lipoproteins and inflammation markers, as well as other independent risk factors.

Patients should visit their physician regularly to assess risk factors, discuss appropriate diagnostic testing and develop a plan to manage overall risk. Here are ten questions to help in this conversation:

1. Am I at risk of heart disease?
2. What diagnostic tests should I have to monitor my risk factors for heart disease?
3. What is Heart Health testing from BioReference?
4. What do my test results mean?
5. What should my blood pressure ideally be?
6. Are my cholesterol numbers within a normal range?
7. What other inflammations markers should be tested to monitor my risk?
8. What treatment plan (including medications) do you recommend to help me lower my risk?
9. Why is regular physical activity important to lowering heart disease risk?
10. What specific changes should I make to my diet to help lower my risk of disease?

*The first step in reducing risk for heart disease is to know if your heart is healthy.
Talk with your physician today about Heart Health testing from BioReference.*

Please see reverse side for common risk factors of ASCVD.

RESOURCES:

American Heart Association: www.heart.org
Cardiovascular Research Foundation (CRF): www.crf.org

The Heart Foundation: www.theheartfoundation.com
Centers for Disease Control (CDC): www.cdc.gov

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