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Take a Loved One to the Doctor:
Questions to Ask Your Doctor About Cardiovascular Disease

If you see your physician regularly for check-ups, congratulations on taking an important step toward good health! But do you have a loved one who you wish would also see a physician more frequently? The "Take a Loved One to the Doctor" initiative encourages people to offer to schedule an appointment for that person and accompany and help him or her get to an appointment.

And what if **you** are that person - the one who waits until something goes wrong to see a doctor? Make today the day you call your doctor to make an appointment.

When you talk with your physician, **be sure to ask about cardiovascular disease**, and encourage the people you love to do so as well.

Consider the following:

- Heart attack is the #1 cause of death in both men and women in the United States.
- Stroke is the third-leading cause of death in U.S. adults and a significant source of disability.
- According to the American Heart Association, the cardiovascular disease death rate among African Americans is 34% higher than for the overall U.S. population.
- Roughly 1 out of 100 U.S. babies are born with a heart defect (congenital heart disease), and monitoring cardiovascular health will be important for many of these children into adulthood.

The following lists of questions can help you talk with your primary care physician and cardiologist about **individual risk** for cardiovascular disease, how to **manage existing disease**, and concerns about your **child's congenital heart disease**. Print out this sheet and take it with you to an office visit and share it with your loved ones to take to their appointments.

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Questions to Ask **Your Primary Care Physician About Cardiovascular Disease**	***Answers from*** **Your Primary Care Physician About You and Cardiovascular Disease**
1. What is my **overall risk** for having cardiovascular disease? Do I already have it?	1. _____
2. What **risk factors** do I have for cardiovascular disease? (For example, do I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes?)	2. _____
3. A family member has heart disease. Am I at risk as well?	3. _____
4. What **tests** have we done to assess my risk for heart disease?	4. _____
5. What can I do to help me remember to take my **medications**?	5. _____
6. How much **exercise** should I get, and what are some tips for doing it consistently?	6. _____
7. How can I change my **diet** to make it more heart healthy?	7. _____
8. What is my **body mass index** (BMI)? What does that mean?	8. _____

Questions to Ask
Your Cardiologist About Cardiovascular Disease

To assess your risk:

1. Why did my primary care physician refer me to a cardiologist?
2. How abnormal was the **test** (blood test, electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, stress test) that caused my primary care physician to refer me to a cardiologist?
3. What will my primary care doctor manage, and what will you help me with?
4. What can I do now to lower my **risk** of cardiovascular disease?
5. What is the **next step** to keep my heart healthy?

Answers from
Your Cardiologist About You and Cardiovascular Disease

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

If You Have been Diagnosed with Cardiovascular Disease:

1. What **symptoms** should I be on the lookout for with my type of cardiovascular disease?
2. Are my **medications** improving my heart health? How do you check progress from the medications?
3. Which **medications** will I take life-long, and which ones may eventually be unnecessary?
4. Will my cardiovascular condition get worse, or is it stable?
5. Are there **medications** that I should avoid?
6. Do I still need **antibiotics** before going to the dentist?
7. If I have a heart problem, should other family members be checked as well?
8. How will my heart problem affect **my job**?
9. If I am **traveling** and something happens, what do I do? Do I need to go to a special kind of hospital?
10. Am I making the right **lifestyle changes** for heart health?
11. What **activities** can I do, and which should I avoid?
12. How much **exercise** or exertion is safe for me?
13. Is **sexual activity** okay?
14. Where can I find out more information about my form of cardiovascular disease?

Answers to
Questions About Your Diagnosis

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

Questions to Ask
Your Primary Care Physician or Cardiologist About Your Child and Heart Disease

1. I (or a family member) have heart disease. Is my child **at risk** as well?
2. My child has heart disease. Should **other family members** be checked?
3. If I have **risk factors** for cardiovascular disease such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, should I have my children checked as well?
4. How much **exercise** should my child get?
5. Should my child have his or her heart checked before **participating in sports**?
6. Are there any **immunizations** that my child with heart disease should avoid?
7. When my child with heart disease gets older, who will take care of his or her heart?

Answers from
Your Primary Care Physician or Cardiologist About Your Child and Heart Disease

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

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