

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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