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?
American Heart Association’s List of Questions to Ask Your Doctor

☐ 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?
American Heart Association’s List of Questions to Ask Your Doctor

About a pacemaker or implanted defibrillator

☐ Does the shock hurt?

☐ How long will my batteries last?

☐ How do I know 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?
American Heart Association’s List of Questions to Ask Your Doctor

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?
American Heart Association’s List of Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- 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?

Call Independence-4-Seniors or visit www.independence4seniors.com for more information on how we can assist those who wish to remain at home.