

PATIENT HANDOUT: Please feel free to copy this page

Why am I taking so many pills for my heart?

Recovering from a heart event can be overwhelming and requires you to make some big changes in your life. Along with adjusting to lifestyle changes, it is important that you take the medications you have been prescribed to take care of your heart and reduce your risk of having another cardiac event.

On average, the risk of you having another heart attack within the next 10 years is **30% or more**. This means that if there were 20 people just like you, about six of them would have another heart attack. The **red SAD faces** below are the people who will have another heart attack, because they did not reduce their risk by making healthy lifestyle changes and taking their recommended medications.



Risk Factor Reduction & Targets

The risk factors below are known to cause heart attacks. The closer you can get to the following “targets”, the lower your risk for having another cardiac event will be. Some people need medications to help them reach these targets (especially for blood pressure & cholesterol), and it is important to continue to take them.

Risk Factor	Target(s)	My Goal	How Am I Doing?
Smoking Increases your risk by three times or more	No Smoking		
Blood Pressure Increases your risk by two times or more	Less than 140/90 mmHg (130/80 if you are diabetic)	BP =	
Lipids (Cholesterol) Shows you have an increased risk by two times or more	LDL (bad cholesterol) < 2.0 or 1.8 mmol/L check with your doctor	LDL = Taking my statin?	
Exercise <i>Decreases risk by 15-30%</i>	30 min of exercise daily five days per week (e.g., brisk walking, cycling, swimming)		
Weight Obesity <i>increases</i> risk up to 60%	Differs for each person, ask your doctor about your healthy weight target		
Diet Healthy eating can <i>decrease</i> risk by 30%	Ask your doctor or dietician, visit www.heartandstroke.ca and the sites below for healthy diet and activity ideas		
Diabetes Increases your risk by two times or more	Hemoglobin A₁C ≤ 7%	A₁C =	

Suggested Online Resources to help you reach your goals:

- The Heart & Stroke Foundation, Canada <http://www.heartandstroke.com/>
Includes the **FREE Recovery Road Booklet**, written specifically for people following a heart attack.
http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iKlQLcMWJtE/b.3751099/k.C320/Heart_disease__Recovery_Road.htm
- **Canada’s Physical Activity Guideline(s)** <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/04paap-eng.php>
- **Canadian Diabetes Association** <https://www.diabetes.ca/>
- **Mediterranean Diet** <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/content.asp?hwid=aa98646>
- **DASH Diet** (to help lower sodium, and your blood pressure) http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iKlQLcMWJtE/b.3862329/k.4F4/Healthy_living__The_DASH_Diet_to_lower_blood_pressure.htm

