

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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