

TESTS TO HELP *protect* YOUR HEART HEALTH

Ask your doctor to give you these tests. Each one will give you valuable information about your heart disease risk.

Lipoprotein Profile

What: A blood test that measures total cholesterol, “good” and “bad” cholesterol, and triglycerides, another form of fat in the blood. The test is given after a 9- to 12-hour fast.

Why: To find out if you have high blood cholesterol and/or high triglyceride levels. Both are risk factors for heart disease.

When: All healthy adults should have their blood cholesterol levels checked at least once every 5 years. Depending on the results, your doctor may want to repeat the test more frequently.

Blood Pressure

What: A simple, painless test using an inflatable arm cuff.

Why: To find out if you have high blood pressure or high-normal blood pressure. Both are risk factors for heart disease.

When: At least every 2 years, or more often if you have high blood pressure or high-normal blood pressure.

Fasting Plasma Glucose

What: The preferred test for diagnosing diabetes. After you have fasted overnight, you will get a blood test the following morning.

Why: To find out if you have diabetes or are likely to develop the disease. Fasting plasma glucose levels of more than 126 mg/dL on two tests on different days mean that you have diabetes. Levels between 110 and 125 mg/dL mean that you're at high risk for developing diabetes. Diabetes is an important risk factor for heart disease and other medical disorders.

When: At least every 3 years, beginning at age 45. If you have risk factors for diabetes, you should be tested at a younger age and more often.

Body Mass Index (BMI) and Waist Circumference

What: BMI is a measure of your weight in relation to your height. Waist circumference is a measure of the fat around your middle.

Why: To find out whether your body type raises your risk of heart disease. A BMI of 25 or higher means you are overweight; a BMI of 30 or higher means you are obese. Both of which are risk factors for heart disease. For women, a waist measurement of more than 35 inches increases the risk of heart disease and other serious health conditions.

When: Every 2 years, or more often if your doctor recommends it.

There also are several tests that can determine whether you already have heart disease. Ask your doctor whether you need a stress test, an electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG), or another diagnostic test. (See “Screening Tests” on page __.)