Protect Yourself From Heart Attack and Stroke

Having diabetes raises your risk of heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Here’s the good news: When you control diabetes, you also help your heart. That’s because good diabetes care is a lot like a heart-healthy lifestyle. Plus, taking care of your heart also lowers your risk of stroke. So you’re probably already protecting yourself more than you may think.

Making healthy choices each day may help your heart, lower your risk of stroke, and control diabetes even more.

**Add a heart-healthy focus to meals.** You already eat about the same amount of carbohydrates throughout the day to keep your blood sugar in a healthy range. To protect your heart:

» Choose foods that are high in fiber and low in saturated fat, trans fat, and salt. That means fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat meats and dairy.

» Cook with olive or canola oil instead of butter.

» Limit salty, processed foods such as crackers, chips, cookies, and canned soups.

**Be active.** Choose a way to be active that you enjoy. Then, each day or each week, add a bit more time or effort. The goal is to build up to at least 30 minutes on most days. Talk to your doctor before you start an exercise program.

**Don’t smoke.** Smoking raises your risk of a heart attack and stroke. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can make it easier to quit for good.

**Take your medicine every day, as prescribed.** Medicines only work when you take them. Your doctor may prescribe a statin medicine to lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. Or your doctor may recommend daily aspirin, if you both decide it is right for you.

What’s a Comorbidity?
Comorbidity means that a person has two or more health problems at the same time. For instance, you may have diabetes and high blood pressure. Comorbidities can change treatment plans because:

1. One condition can make another one worse.
2. You may see several doctors who need to work together to make the best treatment choices for you.

Managing all of your health problems can help you feel your best and stay as healthy as you can.
Over time, high blood sugar levels from diabetes may make it harder for you to see. You have a higher chance of getting a few types of eye problems. These include diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and cataracts.

A dilated eye exam is the test you need to find these problems.

**Who Gives the Test**
Your primary doctor may check your eyes, but only an eye doctor does a dilated eye exam. There are two types of eye doctors: ophthalmologists and optometrists. Either type can give you the test.

**How the Test Is Done**
For this test, the doctor uses eye drops to make your pupils get larger (dilate). This lets the eye doctor see the back of your eye, called the retina.

**Benefits of a Dilated Eye Exam**
An exam by an eye doctor will help find and treat these eye problems. By finding eye problems early, you can get treatment that can prevent vision loss and slow down how fast the disease gets worse.

**How Often You Need the Test**
You may have an eye problem for a long time without noticing any symptoms, so keep getting your eye exams.

- If you have type 1 diabetes and are age 10 or older, have a dilated eye exam within 5 years after diabetes is diagnosed and then every year.
- If you have type 2 diabetes, have an exam as soon as diabetes is diagnosed and then every year.
- If your eye exam results are normal, your eye doctor may say it’s okay to have follow-up exams less often. For example, you may have an exam every 2 years. But if you are diagnosed with an eye problem, you may need eye exams more often.

**When You Shouldn’t Wait**
Call your doctor right away if you have diabetes and notice:

- Floaters in your field of vision. These often appear as dark specks, globs, strings, or dots.
- A new visual defect, shadow, or black areas that look like a curtain across part of your vision.
- Eye pain or a feeling of pressure in your eye.
- New or sudden vision loss. Sudden vision loss is always a medical emergency.

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**Vaccine Reminder**
We all try to make as many healthy choices as we can. And one very important choice you can make for yourself is to get the seasonal flu vaccine and make sure you’re up-to-date with your pneumococcal vaccine.

**Flu vaccine:** Since flu viruses are always changing, new vaccines are made each year. That’s why getting a flu vaccine each year is your best chance for protection.

The flu vaccine is recommended for people age 6 months and older. The vaccine is especially important for people with long-term (chronic) health problems, like diabetes, or with heart or lung problems.

**Pneumococcal vaccine:** This vaccine can help prevent serious problems caused by bacteria that cause pneumonia and other infections. Two different types of pneumococcal shots are recommended for people age 65 and older.

A pneumococcal vaccine is also recommended for people who smoke and for anyone age 2 years or older with long-term health problems, like diabetes, or with heart or lung problems.

Check with your doctor to see if you need a pneumococcal vaccine.
Diabetes and Your Smile

You have a greater risk for gum (periodontal) disease and loss of teeth when you have diabetes. And if you have gum disease, you may have a harder time keeping your blood sugar in a target range.

Keeping your blood sugar levels in control may help keep you from losing teeth and having trouble healing.

Each day, to help prevent dental problems:

» Keep your blood sugar levels within your target range.
» Brush your teeth at least twice.
» Floss once. Press the floss against your teeth and not your gums.
» Check for places where your gums are red or painful. See your dentist right away if you think you have a problem.

Every 6 months, see your dentist to have your teeth cleaned and to check for gum disease. Before dental work starts, remind your dentist that you have diabetes. Many dental treatments can affect your blood sugar.

Delay dental surgery if your blood sugar levels are higher than your target range. High blood sugar levels increase your risk of getting an infection after surgery.

Good Health Care Starts With You

Taking an active role in your care and partnering with your doctor can help you stay healthy.

Having certain tests on a regular schedule can help you manage your diabetes. Talk with your doctor about the tests below.

• Get a hemoglobin A1c blood test every 3 to 6 months.
• Have your blood pressure checked at every office visit.
• Get a foot exam at every office visit, and get a complete sensory foot exam once a year. And between office visits, it’s a good idea to check your feet every day. Small foot problems can become big ones if you don’t notice and take care of them. So you’ll want to give every part of your foot a close look in good lighting. Look for any signs of infection, cuts, blisters, or calluses.
• Get a dilated eye exam once a year. (You may need the exam less or more often, depending on the results.)
• Get a cholesterol and triglyceride test as often as your doctor recommends it.
• Get a urine test for protein once a year.
• Get a serum creatinine test once a year.
• Have a dental checkup every 6 months.
# Tofu With Tomato-Mushroom Sauce

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes  
**Total Time:** 20 minutes  
**Makes:** 4 servings, ¾ cup

## Ingredients
- 14 ounces extra-firm tofu, preferably water-packed
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium tomatoes, coarsely chopped (about 1½ cups)
- 1½ cups sliced mushrooms (4 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons prepared pesto
- 2 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese

## Directions
1. Drain and rinse tofu; pat dry. Slice the block crosswise into eight ½-inch-thick slabs. Coarsely crumble each slice into smaller, uneven pieces.
2. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add tofu and cook in a single layer, without stirring, until the pieces begin to turn golden brown on the bottom, about 5 minutes. Then gently stir and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until all sides are golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes more.
3. Add tomatoes and mushrooms and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are just cooked, 1 to 2 minutes more. Remove from the heat and stir in pesto and feta.

**Per serving:** 190 calories; 14 g fat (3 g sat); 2 g fiber; 5 g carbohydrates; 14 g protein; 16 mcg folate; 6 mg cholesterol; 3 g sugars; 0 g added sugars; 582 IU vitamin A; 10 mg vitamin C; 140 mg calcium; 2 mg iron; 125 mg sodium; 246 mg potassium. Carbohydrate Servings: ½. Exchanges: 1 vegetable, 1 medium-fat meat, 1 fat (mono).

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