



A PROGRAM FROM MERCK  
**JOURNEY FOR CONTROL**  
Advancing Diabetes Education

JourneyForControl.com 01

## Put Your Heart Into Managing Type 2 Diabetes

Living a long, healthy life with type 2 diabetes means treating your heart well. Type 2 diabetes doubles your chance of heart attack or stroke compared with a person without diabetes. What's more, when diabetes is present, heart attacks are more serious and more likely to result in death.

### The risks can be measured

All 3 risk factors below can be monitored by you and your health care team. The numbers can reflect the progress you're making on your journey to control these factors:

- **High blood sugar** levels can gradually build up the amount of fatty materials on the insides of the blood vessel walls, harming the blood's ability to flow. Over time, this process can clog and harden blood vessels.
- **High blood pressure** is a serious condition that makes your heart work harder than it should.
- **High cholesterol** (LDL or bad cholesterol) builds up and clogs your arteries. What you eat affects your cholesterol.

### What you do can make a big difference, starting now

The good news is that you can take action to get your blood sugar, your blood pressure, and your cholesterol into healthy ranges.

#### • Eat for a healthy heart

Ask your doctor to recommend a registered dietitian who can help you plan a heart-healthy diet. You may find you'll be advised to change the types of food you eat as well as the amount.

A heart-healthy diet will include high amounts of fiber, which may help lower cholesterol. Good sources of fiber include:

- Whole grains in cereals and breads
- Dried beans and peas
- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables

Add fiber to your diet gradually to avoid digestive problems.

Heart-healthy meals will also include lower amounts of saturated fat, which raises your cholesterol. In general, sources of saturated fat are easy to identify because many of them are solid at room temperature. Things to watch carefully include:

- Meats
- Cream- and whole-milk-based dairy products, including butter
- Poultry skin
- Lard and shortening
- Coconut oil



## Put Your Heart Into Managing Type 2 Diabetes

To lower your cholesterol, reduce high-cholesterol foods, which include:

- Meats
- Dairy products
- Eggs

Avoid trans fat, too, because it raises cholesterol. This type of fat is found in many processed foods. Read the Nutrition Facts section on the label before choosing among these foods on the supermarket shelf:

- Crackers
- Cookies
- Snack foods
- Commercially prepared baked goods
- Cake mixes
- Microwave popcorn
- Fried foods
- Salad dressings
- Some vegetable shortenings and margarines

- **Increase your level of physical activity.**

Make your target no less than 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. There are some simple ways to add more activity to your day, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking in a remote corner of the lot. Review your activity plan with your doctor. If you haven't been active during the last year, ask for a checkup before you start to raise your level of physical exercise.

- **Reach and maintain a healthy body weight.**

If you are overweight, ask for a meal plan that will work together with your activity program to help you reach and stay at a healthy weight. It's probably not a good idea to aim to lose more than 1 to 2 pounds a week. Ask your doctor.

- **If you smoke, quit.**

Your doctor can help you find ways to kick the habit.

- **Medication.**

Take your medication exactly as your doctor has prescribed.

Every step you take toward following the diabetes management plan that you and your health care team develop is a step toward a longer and healthier life.

**For more information about diabetes, please visit [JourneyForControl.com](http://JourneyForControl.com).**

