



Heart Health Checklist and Doctor Discussion Guide

It is important to stay heart healthy during your cancer care journey. Below are some key tips for maintaining or even improving your heart health as well as questions to guide discussions with your doctor and healthcare team. They can provide recommendations tailored to your needs during your cancer care.

BE AWARE OF THE SIGNS AND RISK FACTORS

It's important to be aware of the signs, symptoms and risk factors of a heart problem, talk to your doctor about the steps you can take to help protect your heart health. Note that some signs and symptoms of a heart problem may look different between men and women, so women may not know what to look for or when to seek care. Not all symptoms may be experienced by every person having a heart problem.

Risk factors may include:

- ▶ Smoking
- ▶ Emotional stress and depression
- ▶ Pregnancy complications
- ▶ Inflammatory diseases
- ▶ Inactivity
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Menopause
- ▶ Family history of early heart disease

Signs may include:

- ▶ Nausea (with or without vomiting)
- ▶ Extreme fatigue
- ▶ Shortness of breath
- ▶ Heartburn
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Chest discomfort or pain
- ▶ Pressure in the chest
- ▶ Upper back or neck pain
- ▶ Indigestion
- ▶ Fluttering feeling in the chest
- ▶ Swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, chest, or neck
- ▶ Pain in the arm, jaw, upper back, or abdomen

Ask your doctor:

What are the warning signs of heart disease, stroke and heart attack? Am I at risk of having a heart problem?



Steps to Maintain Your Heart Health



DON'T SMOKE

- ▶ Avoid smoking and tobacco (including vaping).
- ▶ Talk to your healthcare team about counseling to help you quit, if needed.

Ask your doctor:

Can you point me to resources for quitting smoking?



STAY ACTIVE, IF FEASIBLE

- ▶ Being physically active is essential to heart health.
- ▶ Talk to your healthcare team about how much exercise is right for you.

Ask your doctor:

What level of exercise is safe for me and will also have heart benefits?



KEEP A HEALTHY DIET

- ▶ Aim for a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and low in saturated fat.

Ask your doctor:

What is a healthy eating plan for me?



CONTROL CHOLESTEROL

- ▶ Your healthcare team can measure your cholesterol and help you understand what the levels mean.
- ▶ Track your cholesterol levels and take steps to reduce high cholesterol.

Ask your doctor:

What do my cholesterol numbers mean? Am I at a healthy level? How can I get it to a healthy level?



AVOID ALCOHOL

- ▶ Avoid excessive alcohol use.

Ask your doctor:

Can I drink alcohol? How many drinks per week are considered acceptable?



MANAGE BLOOD SUGAR

- ▶ Your care team can check your blood glucose (sugar) level and provide recommendations if it is high.

Ask your doctor:

What does my blood glucose reading mean? Is it at a healthy level? How can I get it to a healthy level? How often should my blood sugar be monitored?



MANAGE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- ▶ Your care team can measure your blood pressure and help you understand how to control it if it's high.

Ask your doctor:

What is my blood pressure? Is it at a healthy level? How can I get it to a healthy level?



KEEP UP WITH HEART TESTING

- ▶ Talk to your care team to learn if routine heart testing and imaging is right for you.
- ▶ These tests may include an echocardiogram, which is a test to image the heart, or an electrocardiogram, which is a test that measures the heart's electrical signals.

Ask your doctor:

Do I need additional heart testing or imaging? Can you explain the tests to me?