

# WHAT'S MY RISK OF HEART DISEASE?

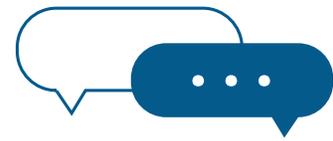
Use this worksheet to share what you know about your risk – or likelihood – of developing heart or blood vessel disease, as well as:

- How it makes you feel
- How equipped you feel to take care of your heart health
- Voice any concerns or unanswered questions
- Your goals and what matters to you

## MY LIKELIHOOD OF DEVELOPING HEART DISEASE

I'd say my personal risk of developing heart disease or stroke is (circle):

Very High    High    Moderate/Average    Low    Very Low



If you already have heart disease: I'd say my risk of having another heart attack, stroke, heart-related procedure or device, acute heart failure episode or other: \_\_\_\_\_ is:

Very High    High    Moderate/Average    Low    Very Low

Conversations with your clinician about your risk of heart disease or stroke are not always easy to understand. Ask questions and find out more. Knowing how likely you are to develop new or worsening heart problems may help motivate you to live heart healthier and engage in your care.

## MY RISK OF HEART DISEASE AND WHAT I CAN DO TO MANAGE IT

When it comes to my heart health I'd say:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Overall, I have a good understanding of how likely – or not – I am to develop heart disease.					
(If you have heart disease) Overall, I have a good understanding of how likely I am to have a repeat heart attack, stroke or other heart event.					
I feel confident about what steps I can take to protect my heart health and lower the odds that I will have a first or repeat heart attack, stroke or other heart problems in the future.					

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I can name 3 or more things that make me more likely to develop heart disease in the first place, or have a stroke or worsening heart disease.</p> <p>List any here:</p>					
<p>It's hard for me to maintain a heart healthy lifestyle (for example, exercise, good nutrition, not smoking).</p> <p>What makes it most hard (for example, limited time, not knowing where or how to start, cost):</p>					
<p>It's not easy for me to take medications to help improve or protect my heart health.</p> <p>What makes it most hard (for example, cost, number of medications taken, difficulty remembering, side effects, etc.):</p>					

## MY EMOTIONS – RISK DISCUSSIONS AREN'T ALL ABOUT THE SCIENCE, IT'S ABOUT FEELINGS TOO

Talking about the risk of heart disease or stroke – for example, the chance or likelihood you might have a heart attack, stroke or blockages in your blood vessels – can be scary.

You may feel:

- **Worried** about your future health
- **Scared** that you won't be able to change your risk for the better
- **Unsure** about what questions to ask
- **Overwhelmed** by the numbers your health team uses or explanations given



**Tip:** lots of patients say they will nod their heads, which would suggest to their care team that they are hearing and understanding what is being said. But they may also be completely lost; speak up if this is the case. Talking about risk is not easy – even for your clinician.

***Risk isn't just about the numbers. It's emotional too, and it can affect our loved ones and other aspects of our lives.***

### It's important to share your feelings.

When I think about my risk for heart disease or stroke, I mostly feel:



Sad



Eh



Ok/  
confident



Scared



Frustrated/  
Confused



Mad



\_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What could make it better? \_\_\_\_\_

When I think about my ability to do what I need to do to prevent heart problems (or improve my heart health and prevent events), I feel:



Sad



Eh



Ok/  
confident



Scared



Frustrated/  
Confused



Mad



\_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What could make it better? \_\_\_\_\_

## MY PERSONAL GOALS AND PREFERENCES

We all have different needs and things that matter most to us (for example, to stay active, relieve certain symptoms, avoid side effects, be there for family).

When it comes to protecting or improving my heart health, my goals are to:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Tip:** Tell your health care team what makes it hard and easier for you to take care of your heart health.

## TALK OPENLY WITH YOUR CARE TEAM, ASK FOR SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS

Risk is not always easy to understand. Don't be shy about asking questions. The more you know, the better equipped you will feel to take steps toward a healthier heart and better quality of life.

When it comes to my risk of heart disease, I still have questions about:

- What it actually means for me – can you explain it very simply?
- How I can set small, realistic goals to protect my heart health and lower my risk?
- What do some of the numbers mean, really?
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



**Tip:** Remember that risk is the possibility or chance that something will happen. It's not a guarantee. For more information, read "What is Risk? Making Sense of Cardiovascular Risk."

**Share this form with your health care team. Visit the American College of Cardiology's website for patient education, [CardioSmart.org](https://www.cardiosmart.org) for more information.**