

Understanding the Connection Between Diabetes and Heart Disease

Having diabetes makes one more susceptible to heart disease. [Studies](#) show that people with diabetes are also perhaps more likely to have high-risk factors such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, which further increases their chances of having a heart attack and even stroke.

The severity and mortality rate associated with heart disease have always been a thing of concern in the medical industry. [According to research](#), cardiovascular diseases are the most prevalent cause of mortality and morbidity in diabetic populations.

CVD death rates in the US are 1.7 x higher among adults (> 18 years) with diabetes than without.



What is the link between Diabetes and Heart Disease?

High blood sugar is responsible for damaging blood vessels and the nerves that control these vessels. The damage in the arteries and veins leads to a limited flow of blood around the body. People with high blood sugar are also more likely to have other conditions that contribute towards the risk of getting a heart attack. These conditions include:

- **High Blood Pressure** – Blood pressure is essentially the force with which blood flows through arteries, and when this pressure increases, it can damage artery walls. Having both high blood pressure and diabetes can greatly increase the risk for heart disease
- **High LDL cholesterol** – LDL is the bad cholesterol that causes the build-up of fatty deposits within the arteries, reducing or blocking the flow of blood and oxygen the heart needs
- **High triglycerides** – Triglycerides are a type of fats in the blood, and low HDL (“good”) cholesterol or high LDL cholesterol is thought to contribute to the hardening of the arteries

Other factors contributing to the risk of getting heart disease or stroke, especially if one has diabetes, include smoking, obesity, and lack of physical activity.

Prevent Heart Disease

While there’s an undeniable relationship between diabetes and heart disease, the palliating factor is that people can reduce their risk for heart disease and improve their heart health by changing certain lifestyle habits. The following are a few ways one can do so.

- **Manage ABCs** – Managing ABCs wherein letters of the acronym stands for the A1C test, Blood Pressure, and cholesterol levels, and (quit) smoking, respectively. Keeping track of the ABCs will ensure that the risk of getting a stroke is mitigated
- **Quitting smoking** – Especially important for people with diabetes because both smoking and diabetes narrow blood vessels, which makes the heart work harder
- **Engage in Physical Activity** – Being physically active makes the body more sensitive to insulin, which helps manage diabetes. Physical activity also helps control blood sugar levels and lowers the risk of heart disease
- **Regular Testing** – People should keep a check on their heart activity by regularly visiting cardiologists or general physicians who use a [PC-based EKG](#) for monitoring the heart, looking to upgrade reach out to Nasiff

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About Nasiff

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