

Diabetes & Heart Disease: Control This “Double Threat”

It is well known that diabetics first and foremost need to manage their glucose levels. Since diabetes can affect the heart, it is also important for diabetics to closely monitor signs of coronary heart disease (CHD). Deborah Chyun and her colleagues studied diabetics' ability to accomplish glucose **and** CHD goals. They also identified factors related to successfully meet these goals. The study included 110 women and men, many from New Haven, who had Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) and were being screened for heart problems.

Almost half of the participants (45%) were not meeting goals for glucose control: a blood test that measures average glucose or overall blood glucose control over the past 2 to 3 months (HgA1c). These individuals also did not meet goals for reducing CHD risk.

Factors related to diabetes such as time since disease was first diagnosed and lack of support from family and friends were related to poor glucose control. Personal beliefs regarding glucose testing and exercise were related to CHD risk factors such as high cholesterol and poor weight control. The researchers concluded a “one-size-fits all” approach is not enough. Individuals with T2DM should be carefully assessed and an individualized health management plan developed.

Bottom Line

Diabetes increases the risk of heart disease, but the risks are even greater if blood sugar is not well controlled. If you have type 2 diabetes, it's extremely important to work with your healthcare provider to manage it and control any other risk factors.

CARE Tips

Though the risk for heart disease is increased for people with diabetes in general, you can lower your personal risk by managing your risk factors. Most of the risk factors for heart disease can be improved through lifestyle changes – improving your diet and increasing exercise – and taking all medicines as prescribed.



CARE:Community Alliance for Research and Engagement is committed to improving health in New Haven. One goal is to disseminate important research findings in our community so that they are easily accessible to all – to educate, inform, and spur action. Yale investigators give thanks to the women, men and children of New Haven who participate in research projects designed to improve health. We value your participation and recognize that you are central to these efforts. We hope that you can use this information to prevent disease and promote good health in your family and in our community.

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