



Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750 English
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OPEN 24 HOURS!

Your family's health is our priority!

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Moderation is Key in All Areas

If you have CVD, a good way to help you manage it is to think “moderation.” This means not doing too much or too little of any one thing.

Eating a balanced diet is an example of moderation. Try to limit unhealthy fats and cholesterol. The best way to do this is to cut down on the solid fat you eat. Examples are butter, margarine and shortening. Healthy fats are usually liquid at room temperature. Examples are olive oil and canola oil. However, all fat is high in calories.

Your diet should also include a moderate amount of protein. Good sources of protein are lean meats, poultry, and fish. Low-fat dairy and eggs are also good sources.

Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. That means to eat fruits and vegetables of different colors. However, drowning your vegetables in butter, dressing or creamy sauces doesn't count! Also, choose breads and pastas made from whole-wheat flour.

Eating in moderation means not loading up your plate or taking seconds. Moderation does not mean cutting out dessert. You can have a piece of cake once in a while. Just don't eat the whole cake!

A good way to moderate your salt intake is to keep the saltshaker off the table. Also, don't add extra salt when cooking. Your blood pressure will thank you for it.

Lastly, exercise in moderation. Ten minutes here and there can really add up!

Smoking and Heart Disease Do Not Mix

Would you like help to stop smoking? Call Molina Healthcare of Utah's **Smoke Free** Program toll-free at 1-888-483-0760 ext. 170458. Molina members can join the **Smoke Free** Smoking Cessation Program at no cost.

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- Molina Healthcare's contracted doctors and hospitals
- Your benefits, including copayments and other charges (if they apply)
- What to do if you get a bill or a claim
- FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers)
- Drug formulary (approved drugs that doctors can prescribe)
- How to contact UM staff about a UM issue or question
- How to get primary care, hospital, specialty, and emergency services
- How to get care after normal office hours
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You can ask for printed copies of anything posted on the website by calling 1-888-483-0760. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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What is CVD? Where does it come from?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a word used to describe a group of diseases and conditions. It refers to any disorder in the cardiovascular system. The cardiovascular system is made up of your heart and your blood vessels. So, CVD can mean diseases of the heart or diseases of the blood vessels. You can be born with some types of CVD. Others, you can get later in life, usually from an unhealthy lifestyle.

Diseases of the heart can include coronary artery disease (CAD) and heart failure. CAD is a disease of the arteries that supply the heart muscle with blood. Your heart pumps blood all over your body, but it needs blood too! The coronary arteries feed the heart with blood. These vessels can get clogged with plaque. CAD can cause chest pain and heart attacks.

Heart failure is also called congestive heart failure. It means that your heart doesn't pump enough blood to your organs and tissues. You might hear it in terms of "right-sided heart failure" and "left-sided heart failure." If the right side of the heart doesn't pump hard enough, the blood backs up. This can cause swelling in the legs. If the left side of the heart doesn't pump hard enough, the blood backs up into the lungs. This can cause shortness of breath.

Diseases of the blood vessels can include atherosclerosis, high blood pressure, stroke and aneurysm. Atherosclerosis is when arteries get hard because of fatty deposits. Fatty deposits are also called plaque. When the arteries get narrow it could lead to chest pain or a heart attack.

High blood pressure is the most common form of CVD in the United States. It means that there is too much force placed on the vessel walls. This high force, if not controlled, can cause a stroke or heart failure.

A stroke is a sudden loss in brain function. Your brain needs the oxygen carried in your blood. It cannot last long without it. A stroke is when the brain is deprived of oxygen because there is a clot blocking the vessel, or the vessel burst open. An aneurysm is when there is a weakness in the vessel wall. This weakness causes a bulge in the vessel. It is very sensitive and can burst.

These are just some of the types of CVD. If you have CVD it is important to know more about your disease and how to best manage it.

Painful Cramps?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a broad term that describes diseases of the heart and blood vessels. Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is one example. PAD happens when fatty deposits clog the arteries in your legs.

One symptom of PAD is cramping or pain in your legs when you walk. The pain goes away when you rest. You may feel the sensation in your calf, thigh or buttock. You may it one or both legs. It may feel like an ache, cramp, heaviness or numbness.

If you feel any of these while walking or exercising, you should see your health care provider. He or she can help you treat this condition.

Here are some risk factors and conditions that can make PAD worse:

- Smoking
- High cholesterol

- High blood pressure
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Diabetes

Smoking makes PAD worse because it narrows blood vessels. This means you get less blood flow to your legs. Smoking also reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and irritates the lining of your blood vessels. When the blood vessels are irritated, they start to harden.

High cholesterol makes PAD worse because it clogs your arteries. High blood pressure and diabetes also causes the blood vessels to harden. Being obese or physically inactive can lead to muscle loss and higher blood pressure. All of these make PAD worse.

See your doctor if you are experiencing leg pain. Together you can make a plan to do something about it.

Over the Counter Cautions

Over the counter (OTC) medicines can be harmful if you have cardiovascular disease (CVD). OTC medicine means drugs you can buy at the store without a prescription. These medicines can react with your prescriptions. The result can be harmful side effects.

If you have CVD, be careful using:

- Cold medicine
- Diet pills
- Antacids

People with CVD should avoid cold medicines that contain a decongestant. This kind of cold medicine can raise your blood pressure. That is very harmful if you already have high blood pressure. Choose a cold medicine without a decongestant.

Diet pills are a concern also. They can contain herbs, vitamins and minerals. They can also have caffeine and laxatives in them. How all of these work in your body is not well known. This can be unsafe for people with CVD. For example, some diet pills can raise your blood pressure or make your heart beat faster.

Antacids can react with medicine taken for CVD. In addition, antacids can contain sodium. This can be harmful if you are on a low sodium diet.

Always ask your pharmacist or doctor before taking any OTC medicine.

Activity/Lifestyle—Fitness

What do balanced diet, exercise, weight control and not smoking have in common? These are all parts of a healthy lifestyle. If you have cardiovascular disease (CVD), adjusting to a healthier life may seem overwhelming. However, it is possible. The key is to set small goals.

If you smoke, the first goal is to quit. Smoking is hard on your heart and blood vessels all over your body. Smoking raises your blood pressure and makes exercise hard to do. It makes blood tend to clot. It decreases HDL (good) cholesterol levels.

If you don't smoke, it can help you manage CVD. Your blood pressure and pulse rate drop just 20 minutes after you quit. After 24 hours, your chance of a heart attack is less. After one year, the extra risk of heart disease caused by smoking is cut by half!

Once you have quit smoking, it is time to give exercise a try. Getting started on a regular exercise routine is sometimes the hardest part, so find something that you enjoy. Start out slow and work your way towards a goal. For example, start out with a 10-minute walk and add a few more minutes each day. Be sure to drink water before, during and after exercise.

Your next goal is good nutrition. Limit unhealthy fats and cholesterol. The best way to do this is to cut down on the solid fat you eat. Examples are butter, margarine and shortening. Healthy fats are usually liquid at room temperature. Examples are olive oil and canola oil. However, all fat is high in calories.

Good sources of protein are lean meats, poultry, and fish. Low-fat dairy and eggs are also good sources. When shopping for fruits and vegetables think, "rainbow." This means to eat fruits and vegetables of different colors. Enjoy their natural flavor without adding salt, butter, or dressing. Lastly, choose breads and pastas made from whole-wheat flour.

Limiting your salt intake is important. Too much salt can cause swelling, shortness of breath and weight gain. Most people should get less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day. But if you have heart failure, the recommended sodium intake is no more than 2,000 milligrams per day.

Weight control will follow naturally with a balanced diet and exercise. Keep a record of your efforts. Remember, you won't achieve a healthy lifestyle overnight, so don't be too hard on yourself. The important thing is that you are trying. Your hard work will pay off!

You are receiving this as part of the Heart Healthy LivingSM program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in the Heart Healthy LivingSM program, please call us at Molina Health Education at 1-888-483-0760.