



Tips for Living With Coronary Artery Disease

Finding out that you or a loved one has coronary artery disease, also known as CAD, can be upsetting. But there is good news: More people are living with CAD thanks to earlier diagnosis and better treatments. Also, you can take steps to help prevent problems and feel better.

- 1. Learn all you can about your condition.** It will help you to ask the right questions, and know how to best to manage it.
- 2. Make heart-healthy choices every day.** Simple changes can make a big difference.
- 3. Ongoing care is a priority.** Your heart team will want you to come in for periodic visits and imaging tests to help track your condition. It's important to keep these appointments. Be prepared to talk about any changes in your health or how you are feeling.
- 4. Find an exercise program that's right for you.** Talk with your doctor about what type of physical activity is best, and how often you should be active.
- 5. Ask your family and friends to help you adopt—and keep up with—healthy habits.** Think about ways to make it fun. For example, cooking a new, healthy meal together or centering get-togethers on activities such as taking a nature hike, riding bikes or trying a new exercise class.
- 6. Take your medications exactly as prescribed.** Medications don't work the way they should if you don't take the right dose at the right time. Talk with your cardiologist and pharmacist if you don't know how to take your medications or what their role is.
- 7. Ask whether consulting a nutritionist or dietitian might be helpful.** He/she can look at your eating patterns and map out a plan for making heart healthier choices, and also give tips on how to control portions and prepare foods.
- 8. Seek counseling and/or join a support group, especially if you feel depressed or anxious.** Untreated depression or high stress is linked to worsening heart disease, including heart attacks.
- 9. Find positive ways to cope with stress.** Too much stress can be bad for the heart—and your general health.