

Preparing for a Primary Care Visit When You Have CAD

Living well with coronary artery disease (CAD) is within reach, especially when you have your primary care physician (PCP) available to help. Your PCP can best help you when you're fully prepared for each visit. Here are some tips to help make the most of your time together.

Before Your Visit

- **Gather information on medicines you currently take.** Be sure to keep your doctor informed of any prescription and over-the-counter medicines you take. This includes vitamins and supplements.
- **Create a list of concerns.** Write down any symptoms or issues you want to discuss. Then, arrange the items from most to least important.
- **Write out questions.** Common questions you might want to ask your PCP include the following:
 - What are the symptoms of a heart attack, and what should I do if I begin experiencing them?
 - What is my target range for blood pressure and cholesterol?
 - What specific lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, medications) can I make to lower my risk for a heart attack or heart failure?

During Your Visit

In addition to discussing your concerns, your doctor will perform a physical exam. This typically includes taking your blood pressure and listening to your heart. Your doctor also may order one or more of the following tests to further assess your condition:

- **Electrocardiogram (EKG).** This non-invasive test measures the rate and regularity of your heartbeat.
- **Echocardiogram.** This test uses sound waves to create a moving picture of



your heart. This helps your doctor determine if blood is flowing properly.

- **Stress test.** During a stress test, you are asked to walk or run on a treadmill. As you move, the doctor monitors your blood pressure and EKG readings. This helps her identify any possible heart problems.

Preventive Care

Prevention is part of effective CAD management, and that means working closely with your doctor to:

- Develop a lifestyle care plan that

includes dietary changes, exercise, and stress management to help reduce your risk for a heart attack

- Keep blood pressure and cholesterol in or below the target range
- Develop an emergency action plan •



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