

Cardiometabolic Risk: What is it and what can I do about it?

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What does cardiometabolic risk mean?

Cardiometabolic risk refers to your chances of having diabetes, heart disease or stroke.

It is important to know what your level of risk is. Knowing how to decrease your risk can help you live a longer, healthier life.

How does cardiometabolic risk affect me?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in people with mental illness. People with mental illness also have high rates of diabetes, which can lead to many other health problems. Lowering your cardiometabolic risk can help prevent more serious health problems down the road.

What can change my cardiometabolic risk?

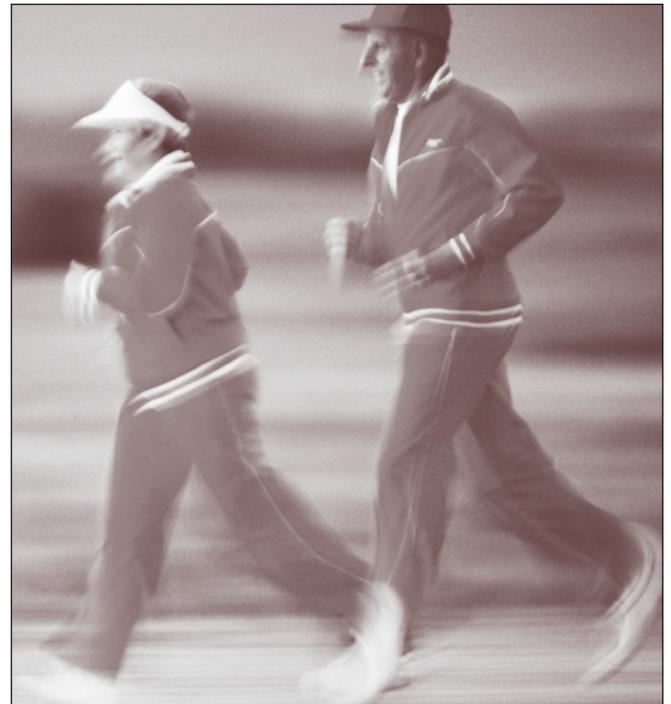
Many things increase your cardiometabolic risk. Some of these cannot be changed. For example, as you get older your risk increases. Men also have higher risks than women. However, the good news is that there are risks you can change.



Healthy lifestyle changes can be important ways to lower your risk. Your doctor can help you find a program that works for you.

Lifestyle changes that can help include:

- ✓ Quitting smoking;
- ✓ Losing weight;
- ✓ Eating a healthier diet; and,
- ✓ Exercising regularly.



A combination of lifestyle changes and medical treatments can help even more, especially if you have:

- ✓ High blood pressure;
- ✓ High blood sugar;
- ✓ Abnormal blood cholesterol; or,
- ✓ Are taking certain mental health medicines.



How do mental health medicines affect cardiometabolic risk?

Certain mental health medicines can increase your cardiometabolic risk. New research shows that some medicines can worsen health problems in people who already have high cardiometabolic risk.

The Office of Mental Health (OMH) talked to a group of national experts on mental health medicines. They identified the following medicines as having medium to high cardiometabolic risk in adults:

- ✓ Olanzapine (Zyprexa);
- ✓ Quetiapine (Seroquel);
- ✓ Chlorpromazine (Thorazine); and,
- ✓ Thioridazine (Mellaril).

Talk to your doctor to find out if you are on a mental health medicine that can increase your cardiometabolic risk. If you already have diabetes or heart disease, one option is to switch to a lower risk medicine.

How can I keep track of my cardiometabolic risk?

You and your doctor may also want to talk about checking your:

✓ **Blood pressure:** this shows how hard your heart has to pump to circulate blood. Controlling your blood pressure is a good way to lower your chances of having heart problems down the road.

✓ **Blood Cholesterol:** this is a fat that circulates in your blood. Having a certain amount of cholesterol is normal, but if your HDL ("good" cholesterol) is too low, or your LDL ("bad" cholesterol) is too high, there are medications you can take. Exercising and changing your diet can also help.

✓ **Waist circumference:** this is the distance measured around your waist at the level of your hip bones. People who gain weight around the waist are more likely to develop diabetes and heart disease than people who put on weight in other areas of the body.

✓ **Blood Sugar:** this circulates in your blood and provides the fuels your body needs. Everyone needs a certain amount of sugar in their blood, but having too much can increase your risk for diabetes.



How is OMH helping to decrease cardiometabolic risk?

OMH is working with clinics around New York State to improve the quality and safety of medication treatments. As part of this project, OMH talked to a group of national experts including researchers, consumers, and family members. They identified several areas that could make a real difference in improving your medication treatments. Cardiometabolic risk was one of the areas chosen for this project.

PSYCKES is a computer program developed by OMH. It is an important part of this quality improvement project. Clinics and doctors can use PSYCKES to see which consumers should get a treatment review. This can help make sure that you are getting good care.

For more information about cardiometabolic risk, OMH's quality improvement project, or PSYCKES, talk to your mental health provider or visit the PSYCKES homepage at: <http://www.psyckes.org>

Helpful websites:

OMH LifeSPAN initiative (available in English, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish):
http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/consumer_affairs/lifespan/

CDC Healthy Living (available in 23 languages):
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyLiving/>

National Institutes of Health Information on Mental Health Medications (English only):
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/mental-health-medications/complete-index.shtml>

NAMI Network of Care (available in 15 languages):
<http://newyorkcity.ny.networkofcare.org/mh/home>