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**Heart Disease Doesn't  
Always Make its**

# Presence Known.

The symptoms can be silent. But the impact can be life-changing. Learn more about the connection between type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

- [DIABETES AND HEART HEALTH](#)
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## Heart Disease and Diabetes

**When it comes to the number of lives taken by heart disease due to diabetes, even one is too many.**

Heart disease is the most serious health complication people with type 2 diabetes can develop – and it can happen to you. When it comes to the number of lives taken by heart disease due to diabetes, even one is too many. 1 in 2 people with diabetes die of heart disease. But the good news is that the sooner you understand your risk, the sooner you can do something to reduce it.

### How does heart disease happen?

Heart disease happens when the heart, or the blood vessels supplying blood to the heart, have been damaged. In addition to diabetes, additional risk factors for heart disease include:

- Having high blood pressure

- Having high cholesterol
- Being overweight or not exercising
- Smoking

### **Heart disease or conditions affecting your blood vessels can include or contribute to:**

- Heart attack
- heart failure
- Stroke

### **Most people think of heart disease as one condition.**

In truth, heart disease is more of a general term, and has many causes. Heart disease is a group of conditions that can affect the structure and functions of the heart, and its blood vessels.

The most common form of heart disease in diabetes is **coronary artery disease** or “narrowing and/or hardening of the arteries”. This happens when fatty deposits block the arteries that supply the heart with blood. If you smoke, have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, do not exercise or eat a balanced diet, your heart is at risk of disease.

Coronary artery disease can also lead to a heart attack. While a heart attack may seem like an isolated event, it can be a sign of a much more serious and long-term heart health problem and can lead to heart failure.

**Importantly, people with diabetes can develop heart failure without having had a heart attack, coronary artery disease, or high blood pressure.**

**Heart failure** happens when the heart muscle is not pumping blood as well as it should, resulting in the body not getting the amount of blood, oxygen and nutrients it needs.

Symptoms of heart failure can include:

- Increased shortness of breath
- Sudden weight gain of more than 1.5 kg (3 lbs) over 1 to 2 days, or 2.5 kg (5 lbs) in a single week
- Bloating or feeling full all the time
- Cough or cold symptoms that last longer than a week
- Tiredness, loss of energy or extreme tiredness
- Loss of or change in appetite
- Increased swelling in the ankles, feet, legs, base of spine or stomach
- Increased urination at night

Having diabetes alone is considered a risk factor for heart disease. The more of these factors you have, the higher your risk is of developing heart disease.

Think of your heart like a car engine: there are several parts that make up the engine. If one part is damaged or is not working the way it should, it can affect the performance of the whole engine. It's the same with your heart.

## **Having diabetes makes you 2 to 5 times more likely to develop heart failure.**

People with diabetes have worse outcomes than people without diabetes when it comes to heart failure.

Unfortunately, one-fifth of Canadians mistakenly believe that heart failure is a normal part of aging, however there are things you can do to protect your heart health.

## **Even when your blood glucose levels are being managed, also think about your heart and blood vessel health.**

**Heart disease is real – but so are the solutions you can take to reduce your risk.**

[Talk to your doctor](#) about your heart health, possible medication options, and the simple steps you can take now to lower your risk of heart disease.

**Remember:** Even if your blood glucose is well managed, this doesn't necessarily mean you are protected from the risk of heart disease.

If you have type 2 diabetes and a history of heart disease, controlling your blood sugar alone may not be enough. But, there are medications that – along with diet and exercise – have been proven to lower the risk of dying from problems related to your heart and blood vessels.

## **A Doctor's Perspective**

What are some of the things that doctors want patients to know about type 2 diabetes? How can patients manage their type 2 diabetes and potential heart disease risk?

**“THERE ARE NEW THERAPIES THAT CAN REDUCE THE RISK.”**

[Watch Dr. Connelly discuss the connection between type 2 diabetes and heart health.](#)

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Watch Dr. Connelly discuss the connection between type 2 diabetes and heart health.

Diabetes is responsible for 30% of strokes and 40% of heart attacks in Canada. People with diabetes were also 3–4 times more likely to be admitted to hospital due to heart related conditions.



## Risk Factors

Having type 2 diabetes can increase your risk for other complications with your health. Find out your risk factors and help protect your heart.

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