



## Check your healthy heart I.Q.

Answer “**true**” or “**false**” to the following questions to test your knowledge of heart disease and its risk factors. Be sure to check the answers and explanations on the back of this sheet to see how well you do.

- T F** 1. The risk factors for heart disease that you can do something about are high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, smoking, obesity and physical inactivity.
- T F** 2. A stroke is often the first symptom of high blood pressure, and a heart attack is often the first symptom of high blood cholesterol.
- T F** 3. A blood pressure greater than or equal to 140/90 mmHg is generally considered to be high.
- T F** 4. High blood pressure affects the same number of blacks as it does whites.
- T F** 5. The best ways to treat and control high blood pressure are to control your weight, exercise, eat less salt (sodium), restrict your intake of alcohol, and take your high blood pressure medicine, if prescribed by your doctor.
- T F** 6. A blood cholesterol of 240 mg/dL is desirable for adults.
- T F** 7. The most effective dietary way to lower the level of your blood cholesterol is to eat foods low in cholesterol.
- T F** 8. Lowering blood cholesterol levels can help people who have already had a heart attack.
- T F** 9. Only children from families at high risk of heart disease need to have their blood cholesterol levels checked.
- T F** 10. Smoking is a major risk factor for four of the five leading causes of death including heart attack, stroke, cancer and lung diseases such as emphysema and bronchitis.

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# C l i e n t h a n d o u t

Continued from previous page

- T F** 11. If you have had a heart attack, quitting smoking can help reduce your chances of having a second attack.
- T F** 12. Someone who has smoked for 30–40 years probably will not be able to quit smoking.
- T F** 13. The best way to lose weight is to increase physical activity and eat fewer calories.
- T F** 14. Heart disease is the leading killer of men and women in the United States.

**Turn this page for the answers.**

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This handout is brought to you by the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), the world's largest association for the senior fitness and wellness industry. This test appears in the November 2003 issue of Functional U, the ICAA's monthly electronic newsletter. For the purposes of this handout, the ICAA has adapted and abbreviated the test answers on the following page. The full-length test is available online at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/hh\\_iq\\_ab.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/hh_iq_ab.htm).



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## Healthy heart I.Q.

### Answers

1. **TRUE.** High blood pressure, smoking and high blood cholesterol are the most important risk factors for heart disease. Obesity increases the likelihood of high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure. Regular exercise and good nutrition are essential to reduce blood pressure, cholesterol and overweight. Physical activity also lowers heart attack risk.
2. **TRUE.** A person with high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol may have no signs anything is wrong until a stroke or heart attack occurs. But a healthcare provider can do tests to find out whether a person's blood pressure or cholesterol is high.
3. **TRUE.** A blood pressure of 140/90 mmHg or greater is high. But a person still has an increased risk for heart disease or stroke if the second number is 85–89. This individual should have his/her blood pressure checked by a healthcare professional at least once a year.
4. **FALSE.** High blood pressure is more common in blacks than whites. It affects 29 in 100 black adults compared to 26 in 100 white adults. With aging, high blood pressure is more severe among blacks than whites, and causes more strokes, heart disease and kidney failure.
5. **TRUE.** Lifestyle changes can help keep blood pressure levels normal, and help in preventing and treating high blood pressure. Also, medication taken as prescribed can help blood pressure stay under control.
6. **FALSE.** A total blood cholesterol level of 240 mg/dL or more is high and increases the risk of heart disease. A level of 200–239 mg/dL is borderline-high and usually increases a person's risk as well. Adults should have their blood cholesterol checked at least every five years.
7. **FALSE.** Reducing cholesterol in the diet is important. But eating foods low in saturated fat is the best dietary way to lower blood cholesterol levels, along with eating less total fat and cholesterol.

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# C l i e n t h a n d o u t

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8. **TRUE.** People who have had one heart attack are at much higher risk for a second attack. Reducing blood cholesterol levels can slow, perhaps even reverse, the buildup of cholesterol and fat in the walls of the arteries, reducing the risk of a second attack.
9. **TRUE.** “High risk” families are those in which a parent has high blood cholesterol (240 mg/dL or above), or a parent or grandparent has had heart disease at 55 years of age or younger. Children from these families should have their cholesterol levels checked.
10. **TRUE.** Heavy smokers are 2–4 times more likely to have a heart attack than nonsmokers, and the heart attack death rate among all smokers is 70% greater than that of nonsmokers. Older male smokers are also nearly twice as likely to die from stroke as older men who do not smoke. And the odds are nearly as high for older females who smoke. In men, the risk of dying from lung cancer is 22 times higher for smokers; in women, the risk is 12 times higher for those who smoke. Finally, 80% of all deaths from emphysema and bronchitis are directly due to smoking.
11. **TRUE.** One year after quitting, ex-smokers cut their extra risk for heart attack by about half or more. Eventually the risk returns to normal in healthy ex-smokers. Even those who have had a heart attack reduce their chances of a second attack if they quit smoking.
12. **FALSE.** Older smokers are more likely to succeed at quitting than younger smokers. Quitting helps relieve smoking-related symptoms like shortness of breath, coughing and chest pain. Many smokers quit to avoid further health problems.
13. **TRUE.** When combined with regular physical activity (such as walking or swimming), cutting calories can help people lose weight and maintain weight loss. An overweight person who loses weight may also reduce blood pressure, lower LDL (or “bad”) cholesterol and raise HDL (or “good”) cholesterol.
14. **TRUE.** Coronary heart disease is the number one killer in the United States. About 681,000 Americans died of coronary heart disease in 2000, and approximately half the deaths were women, says a 2003 update from the American Heart Association.