PATIENT HANDOUT. Please feel free to copy and distribute this page.

Managing Chronic Coronary Disease

You can help control chronic coronary disease by making healthy choices and always taking your medications the way your clinician recommends.

HEALTHY LIVING

Food Choices

- Try to eat less saturated fat and salt, and avoid trans fats.
- Focus on eating more vegetables, fruit, and whole grains.
- Limit red meats.
- This is the basis of the Mediterranean diet.

Alcohol Use and Smoking

- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks or less per week.
- If you smoke, talk with your clinician about how to stop.

Physical Activity

- Being active can help your heart get stronger and work better.
- When you are in better physical shape, you may have fewer angina symptoms, such as chest pain or pressure.
- Being active can also help control high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Aim for 150 minutes or more of exercise per week.

Vaccinations

- Check with your clinician to make sure your vaccinations are up to date.
- Some vaccines, such as the annual flu shot, can lower the chance of a heart attack in people with chronic coronary disease.

Mental Health

- Your emotional health has a big impact on your physical health.
- Talk to your clinician if you are feeling anxious, depressed, or stressed.

MEDICATIONS

Most people with chronic coronary disease are treated with multiple medications. Some medications lower the chances of having a future heart attack or stroke; others help to relieve chest pain (angina) or reduce high blood pressure. The important thing is to continue to take your medications as directed—they can only protect your heart as long as you take them.

Here are the medications you may be taking and their benefits:

- Statins lower cholesterol and reduce the chance of a heart attack.
- Antiplatelets and anticoagulants prevent blood clots and reduce the chance of a heart attack.
- Nitroglycerin, beta-blockers, and calcium channel blockers relieve symptoms of angina.
- ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, diuretics, and calcium channel blockers lower blood pressure, which lowers the chance of a heart attack.

NOTES

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Sources: 1) HealthLink BC. *Coronary artery disease.* 2025. https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthwise/coronary-artery-disease-0#hw-medications; **2)** Writing Committee Members, Virani SS, Newby LK, et al. 2023 AHA/ACC/ACCP/ASPC/NLA/PCNA guideline for the management of patients with chronic coronary disease: a report of the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2023;82:833-955.

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