

Cardiovascular complications

Type 2 diabetes can lead to cardiovascular disease complications. A cardiovascular disease is a broad term that describes conditions that affect the heart, the blood vessels (artery, veins, capillaries etc) and the system that is responsible for transporting blood from the heart to all parts of the body. These diseases can be grouped into

- heart diseases
- diseases of the big blood vessels
- diseases of the small blood vessels.

Common examples of diseases of the heart and blood vessels are; stroke, heart attacks, heart failure, abnormalities in how the heart beats (arrhythmias), narrowing or hardening of the blood vessels that provide the heart and other parts of the body with oxygen and nutrients.

High blood pressure

Type 2 diabetes can occur side by side with or lead to high blood pressure. This makes it important to monitor blood pressure and keep blood pressure within normal limits. Persons with type 2 diabetes should aim to keep blood pressure limits below 130/90mmHg.

Preventing cardiovascular complications

Cardiovascular disease complications are very difficult and expensive to manage. Therefore, preventing them is the best way to go.

Key strategies for preventing cardiovascular disease complications include:

1. Monitor and control blood sugar very well
2. Monitor and control blood pressure very well
3. Monitor and control blood lipids very well
4. Avoid using tobacco or second hand tobacco smoke
5. Keep alcohol intake within normal limits

Use of aspirin

Discuss with the doctor to use aspirin when a person with type 2 diabetes has experienced a cardiovascular event like myocardial infarction or stroke (secondary prevention). Usually aspirin is recommended for primary prevention in adults with diabetes who are aged 50 years or older and have at least one additional major risk factor (family history of premature atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, hypertension, dyslipidemia, smoking, or chronic kidney disease/albuminuria) who are not at increased risk of bleeding (e.g., older age, anemia, renal disease).