

# Connection of Heart Disease and Diabetes

Heart disease is the most common cause of death in people with diabetes.

Even if your cholesterol levels are normal, diabetes itself is a risk factor for heart disease. **Having diabetes carries the same cardiovascular risk as if you have had a heart attack or stroke!**

- People with diabetes are at least twice as likely to have heart disease or a stroke than people without diabetes.
- High cholesterol and high blood sugar levels can increase the risk of serious health conditions. These could include heart disease, stroke and peripheral arterial disease (decreased blood flow to a limb).



## What can you do to decrease your risk of heart disease if you have diabetes?

- Follow a diet as recommended by your clinician
- Try to optimize your weight and exercise regularly
- Work with your health care team in controlling your blood sugar
- Adding a statin to your medications has been shown to reduce your risk of heart disease even if your cholesterol levels are normal



## Should I take a statin if I have diabetes?

- A statin is recommended for all adults 40-75 years of age with diabetes
- Discuss the benefits of taking a statin with your health care team if you are:
  - Older than 75 years of age with diabetes
  - 20-39 years of age with at least 10 years or more of having type 2 diabetes or 20 years or more of type 1 diabetes
  - If you have diabetes complications such as kidney disease, eye disease, nerve damage or blood vessel disease