Cardiac Risk Assessment

Your doctor may do a number of procedures to determine if you are at risk for having a heart attack or having other problems with your heart. If you are aware of the risks, you can learn how to lower them.

YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH HISTORY

- Factors that you **cannot** change include:
  - Your age.
  - Your gender.
  - Your ethnicity.
  - Family history (people in your family who have health problems).
  - Problems you were born with.

- Factors that you can change include:
  - How active you are.
  - Blood pressure.
  - Your weight.
  - Smoking.
  - Alcohol or drug abuse.
  - How well you control your blood sugar (if you are diabetic).
  - Lipid profile.

PHYSICAL EXAM MAY INCLUDE:

- Listening to your heart and lungs with a stethoscope.
- Looking into your ears and mouth.
- Touching pulses at your wrists, ankles and feet.
- Feeling your belly.
- Testing your reflexes with a little rubber hammer.

NON-INVASIVE TESTS MAY INCLUDE:

- EKG (cardiogram).
- Chest x-ray.
- Stress test.
- CT scan.
- Echocardiogram.
- Weight and height measurements.

INVASIVE TESTS MAY INCLUDE:

- Blood analysis.
- Angiogram or arteriogram. (Sometimes called cardiac cath).
- Stress test with IV (in the vein) medicine.

IMPORTANT LAB TESTS

- Desired fats(*lipids*) results:
  - Total cholesterol less than 200 mg.
  - HDL (good cholesterol) greater than 50 mg. Inherited trait. May be raised through exercise and some medicines.
  - LDL (bad cholesterol) less than 100 mg.
  - Triglycerides less than 150 mg.
- Uric acid level. (An early warning sign).
- Special CRP. (Believed by some to indicate higher risk).

TREATMENT

Treatment will be based on personal history and test results.

- Most people will benefit from eating a healthy diet, low in saturated fat and high in fiber.

- Exercise may lower blood pressure and positively impact lipid levels.
- There are also drugs that may be effective in lipid management.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: http://www.americanheart.org

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