

Health Minute

Know your risk...

The holidays are a time for families to gather and catch up on the happenings of the past year. They are also a good time to catch up on your family medical history. Genetics plays a large part in many diseases including heart disease. If you have a strong family history for heart disease, it becomes even more important for you to manage the risk factors that you have control over. The table below can help you identify risk factors that you can work to change in the coming year.

| Risk factors you can control | Risk factors you cannot change |
|--|---|
| Cigarette smoking High blood cholesterol High blood pressure Physical inactivity Excess body weight Diabetes mellitus (tight sugar control) Stress Excess alcohol (1 drink or fewer per day for women, 2 drinks or fewer per day for men) | Increasing age – as you get older, your risk for heart disease naturally increases Male gender – men have a greater risk of heart attack than women and they have them earlier in life Heredity – children of parents who have heart disease are more likely to develop it themselves |