

Cardiovascular Disease: What is it?

Information to improve your health from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

Cardiovascular disease, also known as heart disease, can refer to any number of diseases and conditions that affect your heart and circulatory system. Many of these conditions lead to a narrowing of the blood vessels or blockages in your arteries that can lead to heart attacks, angina (chest pain) or strokes. Cardiovascular disease may also involve arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat), cardiac infections and structural defects of the heart.

Cardiovascular disease can be caused by any number of factors. One of the more common causes for heart disease is atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is a gradual hardening of the arteries often caused by smoking, unhealthy diet, sedentary lifestyle, or being overweight or obese.



Recommended Screenings

Your doctor may recommend the following screenings:

- Lipid profile (cholesterol test)
- High-density lipoprotein (HDL)
- Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)
- Triglycerides

Your doctor may recommend a lipid profile (cholesterol test) which measures total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL), low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and triglycerides. Ideally, your total cholesterol should be below 200, your HDL should be 60 or above, and triglycerides should be under 150. Your doctor may also recommend other tests to determine the best course of treatment depending on your symptoms.



Don't Stress Out!

A stressful life can be an unhealthy life. Did you know chronic stress can aggravate many chronic conditions? Protect your health and try the tips below to relieve stress:

- **Keep things in perspective** – Life is full of minor annoyances, just remember most of them are minor and quickly pass with time.
- **Exercise** – Physical activity has been shown to help regulate stress hormones.
- **Enjoy a hobby** – Read a book, plant a garden or play some guitar on your back porch. Take some time for you, and do whatever it is that relaxes you.
- **Organize** – A neat living or working space can greatly reduce everyday stress.
- **Talk** – Pick up the phone and call a friend or family member. It never hurts to vent off a little steam with a trusted loved one.

If you feel you are suffering with chronic stress, reach out to your physician and let them know. Your employer may even offer an employee assistance program which provides additional coverage for many personal issues, including stress.

If you have any questions about stress management, or would like to find a provider in your area, please call customer service at the phone number on the back of your member ID card.

Your Questions Answered

Do you have questions about a chronic condition such as asthma, COPD, diabetes or heart disease?

If so, call Disease Management and talk to a registered nurse. You'll get personal attention, helpful advice and best of all, your questions answered.

1-888-841-5741

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. CDT

membermanagement@bcbsal.org



AlabamaBlue.com

This information is provided for general informational purposes. Information contained in this communication is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider regarding your healthcare needs. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking medical advice because of something you have read in this informational piece. Always check your benefits for coverage information and limitations.

Eat for Your Health

Just because you decide to eat healthy doesn't mean you have to cut back on taste. Here's a recipe for a savory treat from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute:

Baked Salmon Dijon

Yield 6 servings

Serving Size 4 oz salmon

Ingredients:

- 1 C fat-free sour cream
- 2 tsp dried dill
- 3 Tbsp scallions (green onions), rinsed and finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1½ lb salmon fillet, cut into 6 portions (4 oz each)
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- Cooking spray



Each serving provides:

calories	196
total fat	7 g
saturated fat	2 g
cholesterol	76 mg
sodium	229 mg
total fiber	0 g
protein	27 g
carbohydrates	5g
Potassium	703 mg

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. Whisk sour cream, dill, scallions, mustard, and lemon juice in a small bowl to blend.
3. Lightly coat baking sheet with cooking spray.
4. Place salmon, skin side down, on the prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle with garlic powder and pepper, then spread with sauce.
5. Bake salmon fillets until each is opaque in the center and flakes easily with a fork in the thickest part, about 20 minutes (to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F).
6. Serve immediately.