

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

4 essential health checks to get this year

Get a head start on the new year by scheduling these appointments to help you manage your coronary artery disease (CAD).

1. Primary care visits

With regular checkups, your primary care provider (PCP) can monitor your heart health and prevent complications. Your PCP will check your vital signs (like blood pressure), review your medications, and ask about your lifestyle.

Another time to check in with you PCP? After an emergency room or hospital visit. Follow up with your PCP within seven days of going back home.

2. Blood work

Your PCP will want to

check your cholesterol and triglycerides regularly. He or she may also check your blood counts and electrolytes, which can provide information about your heart health.

3. Cardiac tests

If you notice a change in symptoms or if your blood work is off, your PCP may order additional tests, such as:

- **Electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG):** Measures heart rhythm

- **Echocardiography (“echo”):** Checks how well your heart is pumping blood
- **Stress tests:** Checks how your heart responds to exercise
- **Coronary angiography:** Checks for plaque buildup in arteries

4. Dental exam

Studies show that people with poor oral health tend to have more heart problems. Keep your teeth and gums healthy with a dentist visit every six months.





Your statin starter guide

Statins are one of the most prescribed medicines. They can help lower your cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart attacks and strokes caused by blood clots. According to one recent study, more than 1 in 5 adults is taking a statin. If your doctor recently prescribed you one, you likely have a few questions. Here are some answers.

How do statins work?

Most of the cholesterol in your blood is made by your liver. Statins work by blocking the enzyme your body needs to produce it. The result? Lower cholesterol levels. Statins don't impact the cholesterol you get from foods like eggs and meat.

Which statin is right for me?

Your provider will prescribe a statin based on your health condition, says Alyssa M. Wozniak, Pharm.D. She's a clinical assistant professor at the D'Youville School of Pharmacy.

"People who have had a heart attack or stroke will need what is called a high-intensity statin like rosuvastatin calcium

(Crestor®) or atorvastatin (Lipitor®)," she says. It will also depend on your age and what statin you tolerate best, she adds.

What are the side effects?

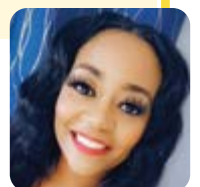
Statins are safe, but some people may have side effects. The most common side effect is muscle pain and weakness. Others include digestive problems and confusion. Your side effects may be worse if you're taking multiple medications.

Talk to your doctor if you experience any side effects. He or she may lower your dose or switch you to a different statin. You might even be advised to stop the statin for a while, says Dr. Wozniak. But don't stop taking it without talking to your doctor first.

Case Manager Spotlight

Latricia Campbell has been a Disease Management Case Manager with AvMed for two years.

"I enjoy being a Case Manager because I am able to assist our Members and make a difference in their wellbeing."



To reach us, please call 1-833-609-0735.



Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

Save time and money with these go-to healthy foods



Convenience foods often get a bad rap. You may think they're less healthy. Or they come with a higher price tag. But there are lots of packaged foods that hit the sweet spot: They're nutritious, low-cost, and easy. Here are some of my favorites:

Greek yogurt: Protein is often the most expensive part of your diet. But Greek yogurt is a great low-cost option that provides about 12 to 15 grams of protein

per serving. Individual cups are convenient for a grab-and-go breakfast.

Peanut butter: Another low-cost protein, peanut butter is also packed with good-for-you fats that will keep you full and satisfied. Other nut butters, like almond and cashew, are trendy, but they aren't any healthier. Save money by sticking with old-fashioned peanut butter.

Bananas: Whole fruits, like bananas, aren't technically

packaged foods, but they're just as convenient! And at about 25 cents apiece, you can't beat the price. Keep them on hand for breakfast, snacks, or an easy addition to a meal.

Precooked grains:

Whole grains are better for your health, but they take a long time to cook. Plain, precooked grains, like brown rice and quinoa, are a great shortcut without sacrificing nutrition.

Remember, when shopping for packaged foods, always check nutrition labels and compare prices. Watch out for sodium and added sugars, which can be higher in packaged foods. And you don't have to be brand loyal — choose whichever product has the lowest price with similar nutrients and ingredients.

Unencrypted email makes it easier to communicate with your case manager!

To opt in, scan the QR code with your phone. Log in or register to the member portal and select "Set My Preferences."



Recipe



Salsa rice and beans

Serves 6 | Prep time: 40 minutes

This is a great recipe to have on hand for busy weekdays. Leftovers are also delicious topped with a fried egg.

Ingredients

- 1 cup brown rice
 - 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup jarred salsa
 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups vegetable broth
- Optional for garnish: finely chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

Instructions:

1. Combine rice, beans, salsa, and broth in a 3- to 4-quart saucepan; bring mixture to a boil.
2. Cover, reduce heat to low, and gently simmer until rice is cooked through, about 40 minutes. Remove lid and fluff with a fork. Serve with extra salsa and chopped herbs, if desired.

Nutrition facts

Calories 175 | Fat 1g (Sat Fat 0g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 35mg | Carbs 35g | Fiber 4g | Sugar 2g (inc. 0g Added Sugar) | Protein 6g | Vit D 0 μ g | Calcium 35mg | Iron 1mg | Potassium 295mg