

How old are your arteries?

You're as old as your arteries, which doesn't always equal the number of candles on your birthday cake.

Your arteries age more slowly and more gracefully than the rest of you when nurtured with daily exercise, a healthful diet, and good relationships with family and friends. They age faster when they're constantly assaulted by cigarette smoke, foods laden with saturated and trans fats, chronic stress, and other traumas. Knowing your vascular age can give you a clearer picture of your heart's health.

Two labor-intensive and expensive ways to gauge the age of your arteries are measures of your pulse wave velocity or the thickness of the inner lining of the carotid arteries in your neck. A free tool you can use at home has been developed by researchers with the landmark Framingham Heart Study.

With answers to a few questions about age, cholesterol, and blood pressure, this tool estimates your chances of having a heart attack or stroke, needing bypass surgery or angioplasty, or developing peripheral vascular disease or heart failure. It also estimates your vascular age. ♥

Information courtesy of the *Harvard Heart Letter*. For more information about the *Harvard Heart Letter*, visit www.health.harvard.edu/heart, or call (toll-free) 877-649-9457.

What's your 10-year risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD)?

STEP 1 Calculate your cardiovascular risk points

Tally up your points from the six categories below.

RISK FACTOR	POINTS		RISK FACTOR	POINTS	
	Men	Women		Men	Women
1. Age			4. Choose A or B.		
30-34	0	0	A. Systolic blood pressure (not treated)		
35-39	2	2	<120	-2	-3
40-44	5	4	120-129	0	0
45-49	6	5	130-139	1	1
50-54	8	7	140-149	2	2
55-59	10	8	150-159	2	4
60-64	11	9	160+	3	5
65-69	12	10	B. Systolic blood pressure (treated)		
70-74	14	11	<120	0	-1
75+	15	12	120-129	2	2
2. Total cholesterol			130-139	3	3
<160	0	0	140-149	4	5
160-199	1	1	150-159	4	6
200-239	2	3	160+	5	7
240-279	3	4	5. Smoker?		
280+	4	5	No	0	0
3. HDL cholesterol			Yes	4	3
<35	2	2	6. Diabetes?		
35-44	1	1	No	0	0
45-49	0	0	Yes	3	4
50-59	-1	-1	YOUR TOTAL		
60+	-2	-2			

STEP 2 Convert points to risk

Find your total points (top row) to determine your vascular age (bottom rows).

TOTAL POINTS	≤-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+
VASCULAR AGE: MEN																			
<30	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	45	48	51	54	57	60	64	68	72	76	80+	
VASCULAR AGE: WOMEN																			
<30	<30	31	34	36	39	42	45	48	51	55	59	64	68	73	79	80+	80+	80+	