

Health Awareness

Be Smart About Your Heart: Talk To Your Doctor About Heart Block

(NAPSA)—Taking care of your heart is an important part of living a healthy life, especially when you consider that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 600,000 people die of heart disease each year—that's one in every four deaths.



Your doctor can help you discover the answers to vital questions about your heart health.

Heart disease makes up a range of conditions, including one known as heart block (also known as atrioventricular block). Heart block occurs when the electrical signals between the upper and lower chambers of the heart are blocked, which reduces the heart's ability to function properly. More than 1 million Americans have heart block, with symptoms including fainting, dizziness and shortness of breath.

The best way to learn more about heart block—and to see if you are at risk—is to talk with your doctor, especially if you experience any of these symptoms.

Five Questions to Ask Your Doctor:

- Am I at risk of heart block based on my health and family history?
- What symptoms could indicate heart block?
- What tests are available to see if I have heart block?
- What treatment options are available?
- Should I see a heart rhythm specialist?

If you or a loved one is diagnosed with heart block, make sure you ask about the latest treatment options. Recently, a sophisticated type of pacemaker from Medtronic, called a cardiac resynchronization therapy device, was approved to treat more patients with heart block. It is implanted into the chest and uses electrical pulses to resynchronize heartbeats, allowing blood to be effectively pumped throughout the body.

Caring for your heart is an important step in taking charge of your health. Visit your doctor to learn about your risk of heart block.