

# MYTH or FACT: The Truth about Cardiovascular Medications



When you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, your medication can help give you the freedom to keep doing what you love. Check out these common myths about cardiovascular medications. Are any of these holding you back?



**MYTH #1:** I've heard that the side effects of medications for high blood pressure and high cholesterol are not worth it.

**FACT:** Any medication can cause side effects, but many people do not experience negative effects from taking medication for high blood pressure or high cholesterol. For those that do, the side effects are often mild. But if you're worried or are experiencing side effects, talk to your healthcare providers. They can help you choose a medication that works for you, so you can keep going strong for the ones you love.



**MYTH #2:** I feel fine, so I can stop taking my medication.

**FACT:** For your medication to work properly, you should always take it as prescribed. Never stop taking medication without first talking to your healthcare provider and always remember to follow the recommendations of your healthcare team.

**MYTH #4:** I eat healthy and exercise, so I don't need to or can eventually stop taking my medication.

**FACT:** High blood pressure or high cholesterol can be lifelong issues. Healthy eating and exercise can make a difference, but these changes may not always be enough to control high blood pressure or high cholesterol. If you need medication, taking it as prescribed can reduce your chance of having a heart attack or stroke. Remember to talk to your healthcare provider about your personal health history and what's right for you.



**MYTH #3:** I'm taking my medication, so I can eat whatever I want.

**FACT:** Taking medication does not eliminate the need for a healthy lifestyle. While medication can help control your high blood pressure or high cholesterol, it's important to eat healthy and enjoy regular physical activity as well. Consider grilling or baking instead of frying, eat fresh fruits and vegetables, and check nutrition labels to find foods with 140 mg or less of sodium. Above all, always remember to follow your healthcare provider's advice.



**MYTH #5:** I've never had a heart attack or stroke, so I don't need to make lifestyle changes.

**FACT:** Just because you've never had a heart attack or stroke doesn't mean that you won't. Don't wait for symptoms. Talk to your healthcare provider and getting your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly.

**STRONG MEN PROTECT THEIR FUTURE AND THE ONES THEY LOVE.**

Talk to your healthcare provider about these common myths or visit [millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov) for more information. It's up to you to decide whether high blood pressure and high cholesterol are in charge, or if you are.