

## What are the Benefits to Me: to start taking blood pressure or cholesterol medication or to quit smoking?

You may have recently been told that you have high blood pressure (hypertension) and / or high cholesterol. Your doctor may have recommended taking a medication. It is helpful in making a decision about whether or not to start taking a medication to know how it be helpful. The web site below has a very helpful calculator to give you some idea of how much a medication will lower your risk of a cardio-vascular event (CV event) like a heart attack or stroke during the next 10 years. It also calculates the benefit of quitting smoking. The calculator uses information from the Framingham Study.

The web site is:

<http://www.med-decisions.com/cvtool/active/patient/patient.html>

In the example below, three different men – all age 56 – put in their total cholesterol, their upper blood pressure number (called the Systolic number), their HDL cholesterol (the “good” cholesterol) and their smoking and diabetes information. The first man has high blood pressure and cholesterol. The second man only has a slightly low “good” cholesterol number. The 3<sup>rd</sup> man has high blood pressure and cholesterol plus smokes and has diabetes.

|                                    | <u>#1</u>      | <u>#2</u>      | <u>#3</u>      |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Age =                              | = <b>56 yr</b> | = <b>56 yr</b> | = <b>56 yr</b> |
| Systolic (upper BP number)         | = 155          | = 125          | = 155          |
| Total cholesterol                  | = 250          | = 190          | = 250          |
| HDL cholesterol                    | = 35           | = 35           | = 35           |
| Sex                                | = <b>M</b>     | = <b>M</b>     | = <b>M</b>     |
| Smoker                             | = N            | = N            | = Y            |
| Diabetes                           | = N            | = N            | = Y            |
| ECG based LVH                      | = N            | = N            | = N            |
| <b>CV event within next 10 yrs</b> | <b>= 21%</b>   | <b>= 13%</b>   | <b>= 37%</b>   |

Taking the following medications will reduce the chance of a CV event in the next 10 years to:

|                                     |             |             |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Only aspirin                     | = 15%       | = 9%        | = 27%       |
| 2. Only BP medication               | = 16%       | = no need   | = 28%       |
| 3. Only cholesterol medication      | = 15%       | = 9%        | = 26%       |
| 4. #1 & #2 medications              | = 11%       | = n/a       | = 20%       |
| 5. #1 & #3 medications              | = 11%       | <b>= 6%</b> | = 19%       |
| 6. #2 & #3 medications              | = 11%       | = n/a       | = 19%       |
| 7. With all 3 medications           | = <b>8%</b> | = n/a       | = 14%       |
| 8. Quit Smoking                     | = no need   | = no need   | = 19%       |
| 9. All 3 medications & Quit smoking |             |             | <b>= 7%</b> |