Risk Factors

What is a **risk factor**?

It is something that may increase or decrease your chance of getting a disease.

For example, smoking cigarettes is a **risk factor** for lung cancer.

A parent who had heart disease is a **risk factor** for getting heart disease.

What are some other risk factors? Write them here:

Some risk factors we cannot change. For example, we **can't change** our family history. Some risk factors we **can change**. For example, we can stop smoking cigarettes. This lowers the risk of getting cancer.

Here are some possible risk factors (not for all diseases). Check the box for **Can Change** *or* **Can't Change**.

Risk factor	Can Change	Can't Change
Eating a lot of refined foods (for example: white bread, pasta, white rice)		
Eating very few vegetables		
Eating very little fruit.		
Father had heart disease		
Living in a big city		
Mother had cancer		
Not exercising		
Overweight		
Smoking cigarettes		
High blood pressure		

Look at the photo. Answer the questions about the man.

1. What's his name?

2. How old is he?

3. Is he male or female?

4. Does he have diabetes?

5. Does he have heart disease?

6. Does he have cancer?   What kind of cancer?

7. What's his height?

8. What's his weight?

9. What is his waist size?

10. Does he exercise 30 minutes every day?

11. Does he drink alcohol?

12. Does anyone in his family have diabetes?

13. Does anyone in his family have heart disease?

14. Does anyone in his family have cancer?

15. Does he eat **3 or more servings** of whole grains per day (wheat bread, whole grain pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain breakfast cereal, bran or popcorn)?
    A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

16. Does he eat **more than 3 servings** of refined starch per day (white bread, white rice, white pasta, white potatoes or low fiber cereals like crispy rice and corn flakes)?
    A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

17. Does he eat oil-based salad dressing or use liquid vegetable oil for cooking on most days?

18. Does he usually eat butter, lard, red meat, cheese or whole milk 2 or more times per day?

19. Does he take a multivitamin?

Look at the photo. Answer the questions about the woman.

1. What's her name?

2. How old is she?

3. Is she male or female?

4. Does she have diabetes?

5. Does she have heart disease?

6. Does she have cancer?   What kind of cancer?

7. What's her height?

8. What's her weight?

9. What is her waist size?

10. Does she exercise 30 minutes every day?

11. Does she drink alcohol?

12. Does anyone in her family have diabetes

13. Does anyone in her family have heart disease

14. Does anyone in her family have cancer?

15. Does she eat **3 or more servings** of whole grains per day (wheat bread, whole grain pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain breakfast cereal, bran or popcorn)?
    A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

16. Does she eat **more than 3 servings** of refined starch per day (white bread, white rice, white pasta, white potatoes or low fiber cereals like crispy rice and corn flakes)?
    A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

17. Does she eat oil-based salad dressing or use liquid vegetable oil for cooking on most days?

18. Does she usually eat butter, lard, red meat, cheese or whole milk 2 or more times per day?

19. Does she take a multivitamin?

What's Your Risk?

Open the website **www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu**.

Click on **Diabetes**.

Click on the blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on .

*My health risk of **diabetes** is…*

❑ Much below average   ❑ Below average   ❑ Average   ❑ High

Risk factors I can change:

_____

Open the website **www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu**.

Click on **Heart Disease**.

Click on the blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on .

*My health risk of **heart disease** is…*

❑ Much below average   ❑ Below average   ❑ Average   ❑ High

Risk factors I can change:

Open the website **www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu**.

Click on **Cancer**.
*Women: Choose **Breast Cancer**.*
*Men: Choose **Prostate Cancer**.*

Click on the ▶ blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on ▶ next .

*My health risk of [**breast** or **prostate**] **cancer** is…*

❑ Much below average   ❑ Below average   ❑ Average   ❑ High

Risk factors I can change:

_____

Open the website **www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu**.

Click on **Cancer**.

Choose another type of cancer. Write the name here: _____

Click on the ▶ blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on ▶ next .

*My health risk of [name of cancer] **cancer** is…*

❑ Much below average   ❑ Below average   ❑ Average   ❑ High

Risk factors I can change:

What's my risk?
You have **below average risk**: You will probably not get this.
You have an **average risk**: This may happen.
You have **above average risk**: You are more likely than most people to have this.