

Cardiac Health Guide and Risk Assessment

The risk of having a heart attack or dying from heart disease can be estimated from an accumulation of modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors. The more risk factors one has, the higher the chance of developing coronary artery disease.

Non-modifiable risk factors include:

- Advancing age (>65 years);
- Male sex;
- Race; and
- Family history of early coronary artery disease (that is, having a close relative who developed the disease before age 50 to 55 years).

Modifiable risk factors – which are controllable through medication and/or lifestyle change – include:

- High blood levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol;
- Low blood levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol;
- Diabetes mellitus;
- Smoking;
- High blood pressure;
- Obesity;
- Physical inactivity; and
- Dietary factors.

One risk assessment tool in use is the Framingham Risk Score, which uses data from a large, long-term study conducted in Framingham, Massachusetts (U.S.A.), to give an estimated 10-year risk for “hard” coronary heart disease outcomes such as heart attack. The Framingham Risk Score uses a system that includes age, sex, total and HDL cholesterol, smoking and blood pressure. It is intended for men and women who have not already had a heart attack or been diagnosed with heart disease.

To check your own cardiac health by using the online Framingham Cardiac Risk Score, please log on to <http://www.mdcalc.com/framingham-cardiac-risk-score>. The list below shows the information you need to have at hand in order to use the tool, and if you are in doubt of your health, please consult a physician.

- Sex (validated only for male/female, no transgender/intersex)
- Age (not validated for <35 or >74)
- Total Cholesterol (mg/dL)
- HDL (mg/dL)
- BP (mm Hg) to choose a category (use the highest category).
- Patient a diabetic?
- Patient a smoker?