



# WHY AM I TAKING SO MANY PILLS AFTER MY HEART ATTACK?



There are **TWO** main reasons you are taking pills after your heart attack:

## Reason #1: To treat “risk factors” that cause repeated heart attacks

The risk factors below cause heart attacks. The closer you can get to the “targets” the lower your risk. Some people take pills to help them meet these targets (especially for blood pressure and cholesterol).

RISK FACTOR	TARGET	MY GOAL	HOW AM I DOING?
<b>1. Smoking</b> <i>Increases risk by 3 times or more</i>	No smoking		
<b>2. Blood pressure</b> <i>Increases risk by 2 times or more</i>	Less than 140/90 (130/80 for diabetics)	<b>BP=</b>	<b>BP=</b>
<b>3. Cholesterol</b> <i>Increases risk by 2 times or more</i>	LDL (“bad”) cholesterol less than 2.5 HDL (“good”) cholesterol more than 1.0	<b>LDL=</b> <b>HDL=</b>	<b>LDL=</b> <b>HDL=</b>
<b>4. Exercise</b> <i>Decreases risk by 15-30%</i>	30 minutes of exercise 3-5 days per week (i.e. walking, cycling, swimming)		
<b>5. Weight</b> <i>Obesity increases risk by up to 60%</i>	Different for everyone (ask your doctor about your healthy weight).		
<b>6. Diet</b> <i>Decreases risk by 30% or more</i>	Ask your doctor, dietician, or visit <a href="http://www.heartandstroke.ca">www.heartandstroke.ca</a> for more information on a heart-healthy diet.		
<b>7. Diabetes</b> <i>Increases risk by 2 times or more</i>	Hemoglobin A <sub>1</sub> C less than 7%. Fasting glucose (FG) 4-7.	<b>A<sub>1</sub>C=</b> <b>FG=</b>	<b>A<sub>1</sub>C=</b> <b>FG=</b>

## Reason #2: To protect your heart and help prevent a second heart attack.

Even if you are able to meet the targets listed above without the help of pills, **you will still benefit from certain “heart pills”.**

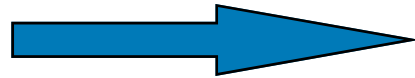
**IMPORTANT!**

### WHY?

The pills on the next page are proven to help prevent repeated heart attacks even if you have normal blood pressure and cholesterol. **If you had a heart attack you will benefit from these life saving pills!**

# What does this mean for YOU in the next 10 years?

On average, your risk of a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack within the next 10 years is about **30%**. This means that if there were 20 people just like you, about **6** of them would have another heart attack. The “happy faces” crossed out are the people who will have another heart attack.

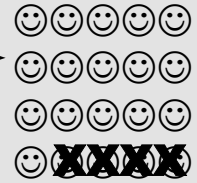


## Life Saving Drugs

### Aspirin (ASA)

Lowers the risk of a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack by about **30%** by preventing blood clots.

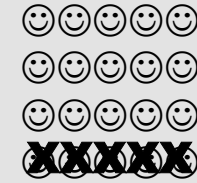
If these 20 people took aspirin, only about **4** of them might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack



### ACE inhibitors

A heart pill that lowers the risk of a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack by about **20%** (even if you have normal blood pressure).  
- some examples are: ramipril, enalapril, lisinopril, perindopril, trandolapril, captopril

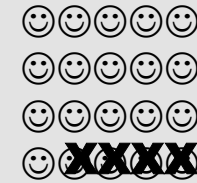
If these 20 people took an ACE inhibitor, only about **5** of them might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack



### Statins

A cholesterol pill that lowers the risk of a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack by **25%** (even if you have normal cholesterol).  
- some examples are: atorvastatin, simvastatin, rosuvastatin, pravastatin

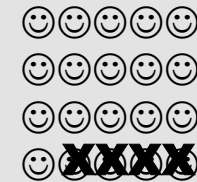
If these 20 people took a statin, only about **4** of them might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack



### Beta-blockers

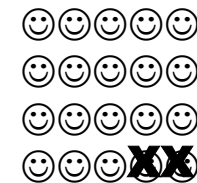
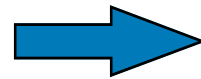
A heart pill that lowers the risk of a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack by about **25%** (even if you have normal blood pressure).  
- some examples are: metoprolol, atenolol, carvedilol, propranolol, timolol

If these 20 people took a beta-blocker, only about **4** of them might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack



### Combined Benefits

You will get the most benefit if you take all 4 pills. While we don't know exactly how much the combination reduces the risk of a heart attack, some estimates\* suggest that if these 20 people took all 4 pills, only **2** of them might have a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack.



- These benefits are **ON TOP OF** the effects of the lifestyle changes on the previous page and are **REGARDLESS** of whether or not you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure.
- These pills are often recommended as life-long treatments. (Not all people are able to take all four.)



**If you have had a heart attack and you are not on all four of these life saving pills, please discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist.**