Cigarette smoking is the most preventable cause of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality. Smoking increases the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, sudden death, peripheral artery disease, and aortic aneurysm. Nicotine and carbon monoxide play a major role as they adversely alter the oxygen supply and demand. This leads to endothelial injury which causes atherosclerotic plaque. Smoking cessation (also known as quitting smoking or simply quitting) is the process of discontinuing tobacco smoking. It is one of the most important modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease. It is associated with various health benefits. It lowers the risk for lung cancer and many other types of cancer. It reduces the risk for heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease. It reduces heart disease risk within 1 to 2 years of quitting. It reduces respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. It reduces the risk of developing some lung diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). With education and discipline, individuals will be able to stop smoking which decreases their risk for cardiovascular disease and improves their quality of life.

Diabetes
Diabetes is a group of metabolic diseases characterized by increased levels of glucose in the blood (hyperglycemia), such as a hemoglobin A1c > 6.5%. Diabetes has a direct link to cardiovascular disease, such as heart disease and stroke. According to the American Heart Association, adults with diabetes are 2-4 times more likely to die from heart disease than those without diabetes. Risk factors for diabetes include a family history of diabetes, obesity, race/ethnicity (African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders), impaired glucose tolerance, HTN, low HDL, high triglycerides, and a history of gestational diabetes. To prevent or control your diabetes, one should manage their stress, maintain a healthy lifestyle (nutrition, exercise), take medications as prescribed, and continue glucose monitoring and control.

High Cholesterol and Diet
High cholesterol (hyperlipidemia) is a condition where there are high levels of lipids in the blood. Atherosclerosis is the abnormal accumulation of lipid in the lining of arterial blood vessel walls. If the body manufactures a clot and is blocked in these narrowed arteries, a heart attack/stroke may occur. There are good (HDL) and bad (LDL) cholesterol. LDL cholesterol is considered bad because it contributes to the buildups of plaque in the arteries. HDL cholesterol is considered good because it carries the LDL away from the arteries to be broken down and removed from the body. This diagnosis can be determined via blood tests and treatments including medication, a healthy diet, and exercise. A DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet is proven to be beneficial by the American Heart Association.

Hypertension
High blood pressure, also known as hypertension (HTN), can threaten your health and quality of life. Usually, the damage of HTN takes place over time. If left untreated, HTN can lead to heart attack, stroke, heart failure, peripheral arterial disease and more. The best protection is knowledge, management, and prevention. The best way to know if you have HTN is to get your blood pressure checked. It is important to keep track of what factors make you develop high blood pressure, so you can take steps to reduce these risks. Make heart-healthy lifestyle changes, take medications as prescribed, and work in partnership with your doctor.

The likelihood of having a cardiac event can be affected by obesity. An increase in body fat can directly contribute to heart disease through atrial enlargement, ventricular enlargement and atherosclerosis. Health problems linked to excessive weight include: Type 2 Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Heart Disease, Stroke, and Sleep Apnea. Knowing your Body Mass Index (BMI) and Waist Size may help you understand your risks. BMI measures your weight in relation to your height and provides a score that determines if you are at a normal weight, are overweight, or are obese. Normal weight: BMI 18.5 to 24.9; Overweight: BMI of 25 to 29.9; Obese: BMI of 30 or higher. Waist size is another important number to know. Women with a waist size of more than 35 inches and men with a waist size of more than 40 inches may have higher chances of developing diseases related to obesity.