

HEALTHY HEART

Within the last 10 years, there have been over 150 line-of-duty deaths due to heart attacks. Is your heart prepared for your next shift?¹

Questions to ask your doctor:

Based on my current age and health, please explain my risk for heart disease and stroke. What can I do to lower my risks?

Is my blood pressure at a healthy level? How often should I have it checked?

Can you explain what blood pressure levels mean and where mine falls?

What does my cholesterol number mean, and is it at a healthy level?

How often should I have my cholesterol levels checked?

What can I do to lower my cholesterol and/or keep it low?

BLOOD PRESSURE LEVELS²

| CATEGORY | SYSTOLIC (higher #) | DIASTOLIC (lower #) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Normal | Less than 120 | Less than 80 |
| Prehypertension | 120-130 | 80-89 |
| High blood pressure Stage 1 | 140-150 | 90-99 |
| High blood pressure Stage 2 | 160+ | 100+ |
| Hypertensive crisis | 180+ | 110+ |

CHOLESTEROL LEVELS³

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Below 200 mg/dL | Desirable |
| 200-239 mg/dL | Borderline high |
| 240 mg/dL | High |

In both charts the optimal levels are the top numbers listed. When having your blood pressure taken and cholesterol levels tested, make sure that your numbers fall within the optimal ranges, and if not, make sure to ask your doctor how to improve/treat these.

WHY GO TO THE DOCTOR?

A day on the job for a law enforcement officer is far from ordinary. The days are long, shift times can be irregular, and work often involves high-risk, high-stress situations. Because of the nature of the profession, it is important for you to annually visit a physician to ensure that you're physically prepared and mentally sound for the rigors of the job.

"Annual wellness examinations allow early detection and treatment of modifiable risk factors for heart attacks and other conditions"

– Rod Hilvers, MD.*

The current life expectancy of an American is 79 years according to the most current data from the World Bank, but according to recent estimates from some health care practitioners, life expectancy among law enforcement officers declines to 66 years. This shortened life expectancy may be associated with stress, lack of physical fitness, poor diet, irregular shift work throughout a career, and the potential difficulty of transitioning from work to personal life after retirement.

Physicians may not be aware that their law enforcement patients are dealing with unique challenges potentially detrimental to their health, and you may be unaware of how your health is being impacted by the day-to-day aspects of your job.



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*This resource was developed with the assistance of Rana Parker, MPH, RD, Los Angeles Police Department and Rob Hilvers, MD, Emergency Responders Health Center, Boise, Idaho.

¹Officer Down Memorial Page. Retrieved April 23, 2015 from <http://www.odmp.org>.

²American Heart Association. (2015, April 21). Understanding Blood Pressure Readings. Retrieved April 23, 2015 from http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Understanding-Blood-Pressure-Readings_UCM_301764_Article.jsp.

³National Institutes of Health. Cholesterol Levels: What You Need to Know. Retrieved April 23, 2015 from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/summer12/articles/summer12pg6-7.html>

⁴Compiled with the assistance of the IACP Police Physicians Section.



This pamphlet contains a list of recommended questions to pose to your physician to ensure that you're healthy and ready for the job as a law enforcement officer.



