

# Monitoring cardiovascular risk

PEOPLE with diabetes are more likely to develop cardiovascular diseases (CVD) compared with non-diabetics. About two out of three diabetics die from heart attack or stroke, making it the No 1 cause of death in this group.

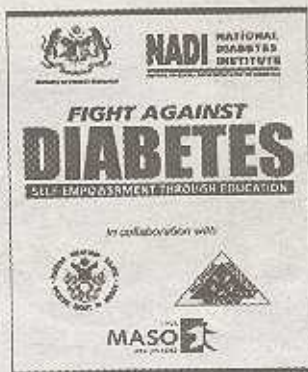
CVD can be classified into two broad categories. The first category, macrovascular complications (affecting the large blood vessels), causes heart attack, stroke and clogged arteries in the legs.

The second category, microvascular damage (which affect the small blood vessels), often causes damage to the eyes (often resulting in blindness), the kidneys and nerves thereby also causing diabetic foot, diabetic skin problems (dermopathy) and erectile dysfunction.

## ● Why Diabetes Raises CVD Risk

PEOPLE with diabetes usually have three major CVD risk factors (ie high blood glucose levels, high blood pressure and an abnormal blood lipids profile).

High concentrations of blood glucose and high blood pressure damage the inner lining (or endothelium) of blood vessels. LDL-cholesterol (bad cholesterol) molecules in the blood penet-



rate and accumulate inside the vessel walls to form lesions called plaque.

As plaque grows, the blood flow is constricted. When the plaque ruptures, the blood clot that forms often completely blocks off blood flow. If this occurs in the coronary arteries, a heart attack happens. If it occurs in the brain, a stroke results. The likelihood of such events increases if the diabetic person is also a smoker.

Cardiovascular events can be prevented by monitoring the danger signs.

## ■ Monitor Blood Glucose Level

Keep your blood glucose levels within the normal range — within 4-6 mmol/L (if fasting) and less than 7.8 mmol/L (two hours after a

meal). Do this by practising self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) using a home glucometer kit.

## ■ Monitor Blood Pressure

Generally, your target blood pressure goal should be less than 130/80 mmHg.

Check your blood pressure regularly using a reliable blood pressure monitor. Have your doctor check the accuracy of your blood pressure monitor at least twice a year.

## ■ Monitor Blood Lipids

It is not necessary to check your blood cholesterol more than once or twice a year (unless otherwise directed by your physician).

Inform your doctor immediately if you feel discomfort or pain in the chest, experience shortness of breath blurred vision or a tingling feeling or pain in your limbs.

■ **Fight Against Diabetes is supported by Pharmaniaga Berhad, the Taj Mahal Rice For Life programme, Equal Sensicare Bureau, OneTouch Centre by Lifescan and the 10-20-30 Healthier Weight Programme by Abbott Laboratories. For enquiries, call 03-56378588.**