

Cardiovascular Diseases

CVDs are the leading cause of death globally. Of the estimated 17.9 million deaths due to CVDs in 2019, that is 32 per cent of all deaths, 85 per cent die from heart attack and **stroke**. **Early detection** is important.

Most CVDs can be prevented by looking at the risk factors associated with them. These risk factors include smoking, unhealthy diet and **obesity**, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol. CVDs include a

long list of disorders, such as coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, rheumatic heart disease, congenital heart disease, deep vein thrombosis, and **pulmonary embolism**. One of the **precursors** of CVDs is **hypertension**. Known as the “silent killer”, many people don’t realise that they have it and it is often **by coincidence** that it is diagnosed.

Male pharmacy customer: Hello. Do you speak English?

PTA: Hello, yes I do. How may I help you?

I have a prescription for hypertension medication. I did a series of tests at the doctor’s office as I was having health problems. I had to do a 24-hour **monitoring** test with a **blood pressure device**, which **confirmed** my GP’s **suspicions**. A blood test showed **elevated cholesterol** and a **carotid artery** scan showed signs of slight atherosclerosis. I’m a bit shocked to be honest!

Yes, it is a lot to deal with. But you should consider yourself lucky that your doctor had those suspicions! I see from your prescription that your doctor has prescribed a beta-blocker and a diuretic.

Why is that? I know that she told me what they are for, but I was so **taken aback** that I wasn’t really listening!

Oh, that’s understandable. The main function of beta-blockers is to block receptors for adrenaline and noradrenaline, which are released in stress situations. One of the effects of a diuretic is to block special transport systems in the **kidneys**, which lead to more salt and water being **excreted**. This in turn leads to lower blood volume and blood pressure.

You said one of the effects, are there others?

The other main effect is that **potassium** channels in the vascular muscles are opened, which means that they don’t **constrict** as easily, which also leads to a lowering of the blood pressure.

As this is my first time ever taking this kind of medication, is there anything that I should consider while taking them?

You need to keep an eye on your daily weight and your blood pressure. I assume that your doctor recommended that you come to the surgery at least once a week to monitor your progress, did she?

Yes, she did. Do you have BP devices here?

Yes, this one here is our best-seller. It’s a professional device that is also used in doctors’ practices.

Good, I’ll take it so that I can get started right away.

There you are and here is a card with our telephone number.

Thank you, you have been very helpful.

No problem. Goodbye.

Bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

Cardiovascular Diseases, CVDs	Herz-Kreislauf-Erkrankungen
stroke	Schlaganfall
early detection	Früherkennung
obesity	Adipositas, Fettleibigkeit
congenital	angeboren
pulmonary embolism	Lungenembolie
precursor	Vorstufe
hypertension	Hypertonie, Bluthochdruck
by coincidence	zufällig
monitoring	Kontrolle
blood pressure device or BP device	Blutdruckmessgerät
confirmed ... suspicions	bestätigt den Verdacht
elevated cholesterol	erhöhtes Cholesterin
carotid artery	Halsschlagader
taken aback	verdattert
kidneys	Nieren
excreted	ausgeschieden
potassium	Kalium
constrict	(sich) zusammenziehen
surgery	(hier) Arztpraxis
gut	Darm