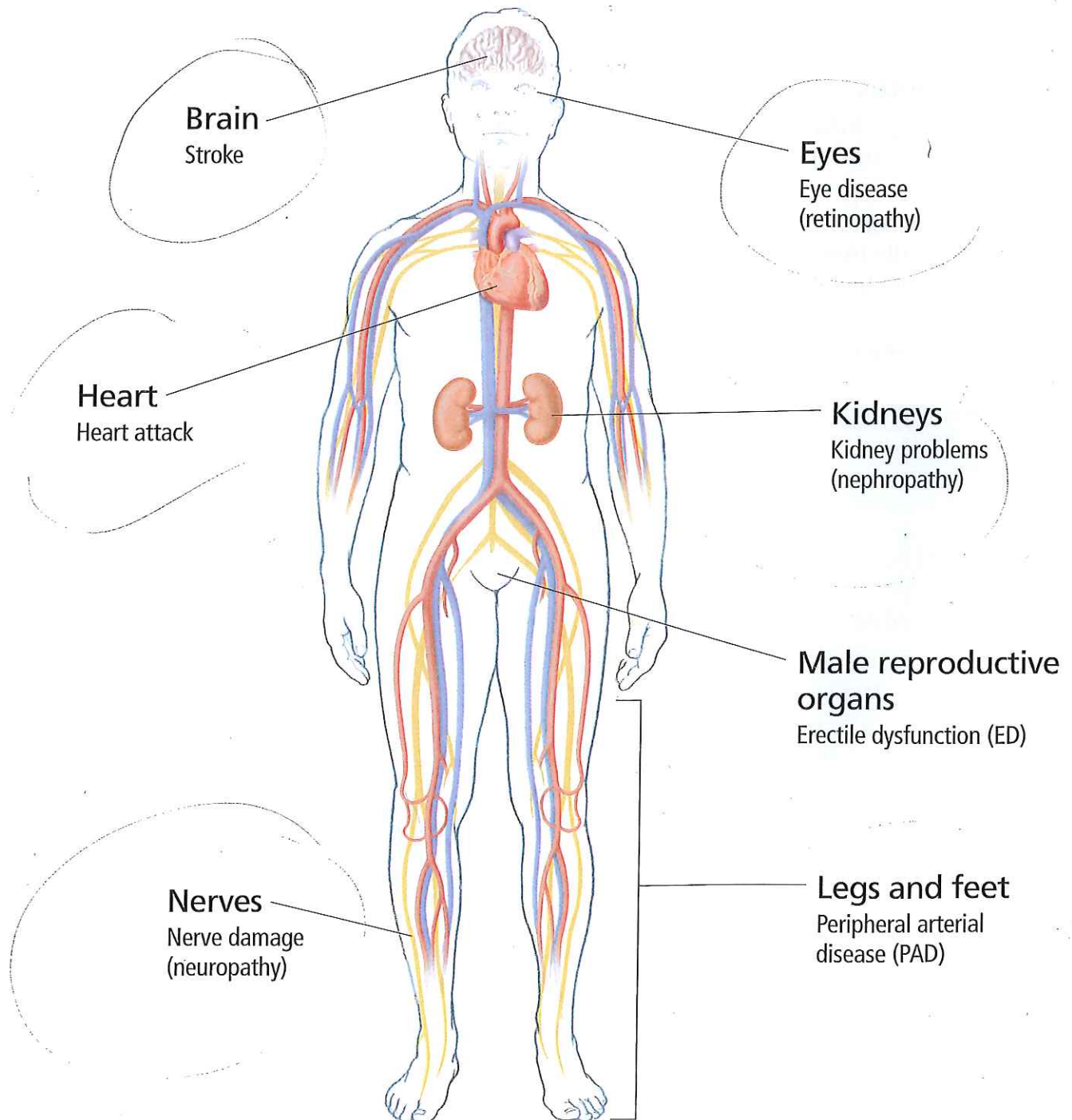


Why High Blood Glucose Is a Problem

Over time, high blood glucose damages your blood vessels, both large and small. This damage leads to complications that affect the whole body. Complications include heart attack, stroke, kidney damage, blindness, nerve damage, and risk of limb loss (amputation). But, by managing your blood glucose according to your plan, you can help reduce your risk of complications.



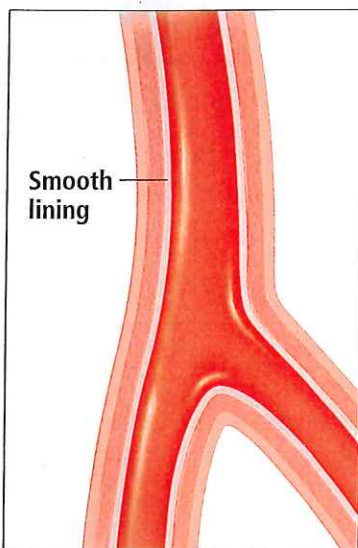
Diabetes and Cardiovascular Risk

Over time, high blood glucose can lead to **cardiovascular** (heart and blood vessel) disease. Cardiovascular disease can lead to heart attack or stroke.

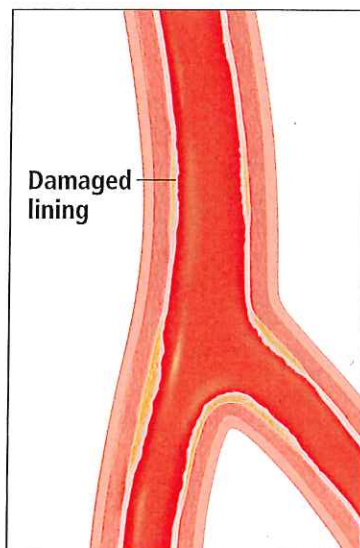
People with long-term high blood glucose are especially at risk. They have a high chance of dying of, or being disabled by, heart attack or stroke.

High Blood Glucose Damages Artery Walls

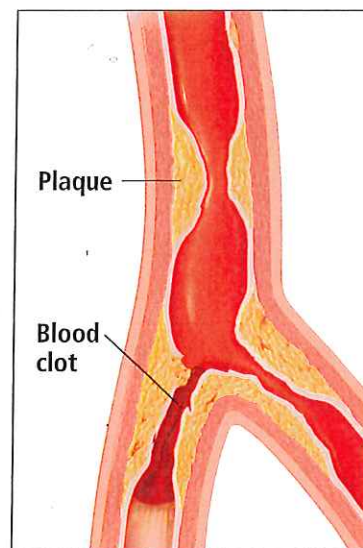
The buildup of glucose in the blood affects the lining of **artery** walls. (An artery is a type of blood vessel. A vein is another type.) Arteries carry blood from the heart to the rest of the body. When arteries are healthy, the lining is smooth. But when you have high blood glucose, the artery lining becomes damaged over time. This allows the buildup of **plaque** (fatty materials, such as cholesterol) in the arteries.



When the lining is smooth, blood flows easily through the arteries.



Over time, high blood glucose damages the lining.



Plaque builds up in the artery walls, making it hard for blood to get through.

How Heart Attack and Stroke Happen

The buildup of plaque narrows arteries. This means that any blockage, such as a blood clot, can cut off blood flow. When this happens, heart attack and stroke can occur. Many people with diabetes also have other cardiovascular risk factors, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol. These problems increase the chance of heart attack or stroke even further. But managing your risk factors, including your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol, can help delay or prevent these problems. Read on to learn about managing your blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol.