New cardiovascular prevention guidelines are helping doctors provide the best treatment focused on four important areas:

1. **IT ALL STARTS WITH DOCTOR-PATIENT DISCUSSIONS.**
   - Cholesterol “number” no longer main factor in treatment
   - Overall health status is now main treatment factor
   - More people may benefit from statins

2. **THOSE DISCUSSIONS DRIVE PERSONALIZED TREATMENT FOR EACH PATIENT.**
   - 40 minutes of exercise 3–4 days a week
   - Eat lots of fruit, veggies
   - Reduce sodium in diet

3. **DOCTORS SHOULD LOOK AT THE OVERALL HEALTH OF EACH PATIENT.**
   - Obesity treated like a disease
   - Weight-loss strategies based on body mass index
   - Diet, exercise still best bets

4. **ASSESSMENT OF RISK** (for heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases.)
   - Calculators that assess risk used to start doctor discussions
   - Risk in African-Americans and risk for stroke calculated for first time
   - More thorough risk assessments for women

Here’s what you need to know about the guidelines, released Nov. 12 by the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiologists:

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