

Controlling High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (hypertension) is called the silent killer. This is because many people who have it don't know it. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80. Know your blood pressure and remember to check it regularly. Doing so can save your life. Here are some things you can do to help control your blood pressure.



Choose heart-healthy foods

- Select low-salt, low-fat foods.
- Limit canned, dried, cured, packaged, and fast foods. These can contain a lot of salt.
- Eat 8–10 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Choose lean meats, fish, or chicken.
- Eat whole-grain pasta, brown rice, and beans.
- Eat 2–3 servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy products
- Ask your doctor about the DASH eating plan. This plan helps reduce blood pressure.

Maintain a healthy weight

- Ask your healthcare provider how many calories to eat a day. Then stick to that number.
- Ask your healthcare provider what weight range is healthiest for you. If you are overweight, weight loss of only 10 lbs can help lower blood pressure.
- Limit snacks and sweets.
- Get regular exercise.



Get up and get active

- Choose activities you enjoy. Find ones you can do with friends or family.
- Park farther away from building entrances.
- Use stairs instead of the elevator.
- When you can, walk or bike instead of driving.
- Rake leaves, garden, or do household repairs.
- Be active for at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week.

Manage stress

- Make time to relax and enjoy life. Find time to laugh.
- Visit with family and friends, and keep up with hobbies.

Limit alcohol and quit smoking

- Men: Have no more than 2 drinks per day.
- Women: Have no more than 1 drink per day.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about quitting smoking. Smoking increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. Ask about local or community programs that can help.

Medications

If lifestyle changes aren't enough, your healthcare provider may prescribe high blood pressure medicine. Take all medications as prescribed.