

Prevent and Control High Blood Pressure: Mission Possible



►► What you should know about preventing and controlling high blood pressure



High blood pressure: A force to be reckoned with

High blood pressure (also called hypertension) increases your chances of having a heart attack, heart failure, stroke, kidney disease, and other life-threatening illnesses. Anyone can get it, and as you get older, the likelihood of your developing high blood pressure increases. If you are overweight or obese or if you have diabetes, the odds are even higher.

Know your numbers

High blood pressure is called “the silent killer” because there often are no symptoms. Your numbers are your only warning.

Normal blood pressure

the pressure of blood in the vessels when the heart beats: **systolic pressure**

less than
120/80 mmHg

millimeters of mercury

the pressure between beats when the heart relaxes: **diastolic pressure**



High blood pressure

140/90 mmHg or higher

Prehypertension

between 120-39 and/or 80-89 mmHg

Normal blood pressure

less than 120/80 mmHg

Enlist in this vital mission for
a healthier you



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services



8 things you can do to prevent and control high blood pressure

- 1. Talk with your health care professional.** Ask what your blood pressure numbers are and ask what they mean.
- 2. Take medication as prescribed.** If you need medication, make sure you understand what it's for and how and when to take it, then take it as your doctor recommends.
- 3. Lose weight if you are overweight and maintain a healthy weight.** Limit portion sizes, especially of high calorie foods, and try to eat only as many calories as you burn each day—or less if you want to lose weight.
- 4. Eat heart healthfully.** Follow an eating plan that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, and lowfat dairy products and is moderate in total fat and low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- 5. Reduce salt and sodium intake.** Read food labels to choose canned, processed, and convenience foods that are lower in sodium. Limit sodium intake to no more than 2,400 mg, or about 1 teaspoon's worth, of salt each day. Avoid fast foods that are high in salt and sodium.
- 6. If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.** For men, that means a maximum of 2 drinks a day, for women, a maximum of 1.
- 7. Become more physically active.** Work up to at least 30 minutes of a moderate-level activity, such as brisk walking or bicycling, each day. If you don't have 30 minutes, try to find two 15-minute periods or even three 10-minute periods for physical activity.
- 8. Quit smoking.** Smoking increases your chances of developing a stroke, heart disease, peripheral arterial disease, and several forms of cancer.



National High Blood Pressure
Education Program

Resources to help you stay healthy



Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure includes information on how to detect, prevent, and treat high blood pressure. Features the DASH eating plan, which has been shown to prevent and lower high blood pressure, and information specifically for women.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/index.html>

Aim for a Healthy Weight includes a BMI calculator, tips for shopping and preparing food, and a menu planner that is designed to guide daily food and meal choices based on one day's calorie allowance.

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm

Live Healthier, Live Longer includes interactive materials for people with heart disease and those who want to prevent it.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/index.htm>

NHLBI Health Information Center

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