

Preventing and Controlling High Blood Pressure



STRESS
...AT WORK

Maintain a Health Weight

Be Active

Maintain a Healthy Diet

Moderate Alcohol Use

Prevent and Control Diabetes

No Tobacco

Medications

Genetic Factors

There are several things you can do to keep your blood pressure healthy. To accomplish this, these actions need to become part of your lifestyle.

1. Maintain a Health Weight

Overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk for many diseases and health conditions, including the following:

Hypertension (high blood pressure)

Osteoarthritis (a degeneration of cartilage and its underlying bone within a joint)

Dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides)

Type 2 diabetes

Coronary heart disease

Stroke

Gallbladder disease

Sleep apnea and respiratory problems

Some cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)

Being overweight or obese can raise your blood pressure, and losing weight can help you lower your blood pressure. Every excess pound of bodyfat we carry causes the body to create one mile of extra blood vessels which the heart must pump blood to feed this extra tissue.

If you are struggling with any of these issues please consult your physician.



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2. Be Active

Being inactive when it comes to elevated blood pressure is a real no-no. Even if you only go on a 15-20 minute walk; this is way better than being inactive. The Surgeon General recommends that adults should engage in moderate-level physical activities for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.

Who ever said physical activity is all work and no play? In fact, it can be just the opposite! There is

no need to think of strenuous exercise or boring workouts. Instead, imagine doing fun physical activities you enjoy and watch the health benefits follow.

If you want to make positive, lasting change in your life, it helps to spend some time thinking about motivation. What are your personal goals? What obstacles do you anticipate and how might you overcome them? It's also a good idea to visualize your success and consider how you might celebrate your achievements.



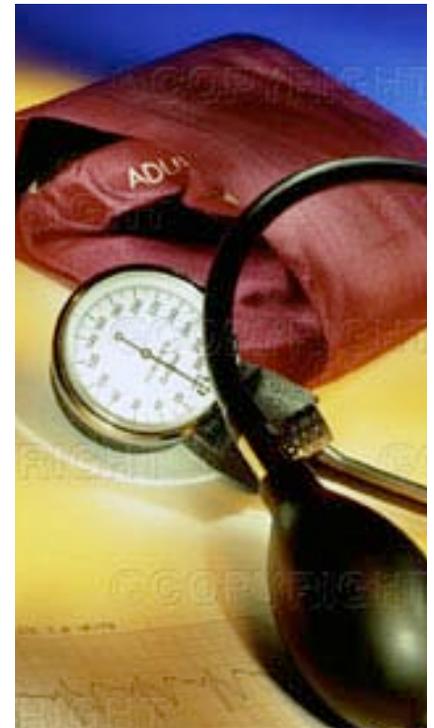
3. Maintain a Healthy Diet

For the exercise and the healthy weight to really work you'll need to maintain a healthy nutrition plan. To make a noticeable impact on your blood pressure numbers, eating 6-10 servings of fruits and vegetables daily is a must. High salt intakes and low sodium intakes from not enough fruits and vegetables can elevate blood pressure. Check out the DASH nutrition plan on the web. Also check out:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/>

Variety, Balance, and Moderation

There is no secret to healthy eating. Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grain products. Also include low-fat or non-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, and legumes. Drink lots of water and go easy on the salt, sugar, alcohol, and saturated fat. Good nutrition should be part of an overall healthy lifestyle, that also includes regular physical activity, not smoking, and stress management.



Being Active

Stretching
Strength Training
Water Aerobics
Swimming
Cycling
Tai Chi
Pilates
Walking
It all works!



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4. Moderate Alcohol Use

Another way to improve your overall cardiovascular health is to limit the amount of alcohol.

While drinking in moderation doesn't seem to have much of an impact on your heart, having more than three drinks a day may contribute to



high blood pressure. Alcohol has been shown to raise blood pressure by interfering with the flow of blood to and from the heart. When alcohol courses through your bloodstream, it pushes blood rich in nutrients away from your heart.

Studies have shown that it is much more difficult to control blood pressure if you drink heavily. Conversely, a reduction in alcohol consumption can help lower blood pressure.

5. Prevent and Control Diabetes

Understanding the Link Between Hypertension and Diabetes

Controlling blood sugar levels are crucial for people with diabetes. But equally important is blood pressure control. High blood pressure and diabetes often occur together and if left untreated can lead to serious consequences.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among people with diabetes, yet much of the population remains unaware of the risk. Chronic hyperglycemia (high blood glucose levels) can cause arteries to narrow and/or lose elasticity, and high cholesterol levels can clog arteries with fat deposits. Because of this narrowing, and loss of elasticity, the heart must create more pressure to push the blood out into the circulatory system, thus, an increase in pressure means more risk of developing hypertension. Because insulin resistance is associated with cardiovascular problems, people with type 2 diabetes are at increased risk for heart disease.

If you have diabetes now, but don't have hypertension, that's great, but you need to be aware that diabetes can and mostly like will lead to cardiovascular disease.



**Normal Blood Pressure
Less than 120 and
less than 80**



Being Active

Stretching

Strength Training

Water Aerobics

Swimming

Cycling

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Pilates

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One out of three people in America have hypertension

Secondhand Smoke Causes Heart Disease

Secondhand smoke exposure has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease.

Secondhand smoke is estimated to cause from 22,000 to 69,000 premature deaths from heart disease each year in the United States among nonsmokers.

Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25–30%.

6. No Tobacco

Smoking injures blood vessels and speeds up the process of hardening of the arteries.

Smoking causes coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.

Cigarette smokers are 2–4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers.

Cigarette smoking approximately doubles a person's risk for stroke.



Cigarette smoking causes reduced circulation by narrowing the blood vessels (arteries). Smokers are more than 10 times as likely as nonsmokers to develop peripheral vascular disease.

7. Medications

If you develop high blood pressure, your doctor may prescribe medications, in addition to lifestyle changes, to help bring your blood pressure under control. Once it's under control, it's imperative that you continue with your medication and lifestyle changes to keep your blood pressure in check. You will also need to see your doctor on a regular basis to communicate any lifestyle changes, any addition or subtraction of other medications, and to have your blood pressure recorded in your doctor's office.

8. Genetic Factors

Your genetic DNA that has been passed down through the generations may put you at greater risk of developing hypertension.

The chance of developing hypertension can be reduced by taking steps to prevent and control factors that put people at greater risk.

Heart disease tends to cluster in families; thus, family medical history offers important information for identifying risk in individuals. Such histories can capture the effects and interactions of shared genetic and environmental factors that lead to disease in a family.



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