



How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

About Blood Pressure

What is blood pressure?

Your blood pressure is how hard your blood pushes against the walls of your arteries (blood vessels). It is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

How do you test your blood pressure?

To measure your blood pressure, we use a blood pressure cuff. The cuff gives you 2 numbers. For example 130/80, read as “130 over 80”. This is the only way to tell if your blood pressure is normal.

What do blood pressure numbers mean?

When you take your blood pressure, you get 2 numbers:

- Systolic pressure is the top number. This is the amount of pressure against your blood vessels when you heart beats. It is the higher number.
- Diastolic pressure is the bottom number. This is the amount of pressure between beats, when your heart rests. It is the lower number.

What is a normal blood pressure?

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80.



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Grade Level Range: 2nd – 6th

Grade Level Mean: 3.9



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About High Blood Pressure

What is high blood pressure?

If the pressure in your blood vessels is higher than it should be, you may have high blood pressure, or hypertension. This is a systolic pressure higher than 130, or a diastolic pressure higher than 80.

How do I know what my blood pressure should be?

Use the chart below to find where your blood pressure readings fit.

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic pressure (top number)		Diastolic pressure (bottom number)
Normal	Less than 120	And	Less than 80
Elevated (higher than normal)	120 to 129	And	Less than 80
High blood pressure Stage 1 hypertension	130 to 139	Or	80 to 89
High blood pressure Stage 2 hypertension	140 or higher	Or	90 or higher
Emergency Call your doctor right away	Higher than 180	And, or	Higher than 120

Why do I have high blood pressure?

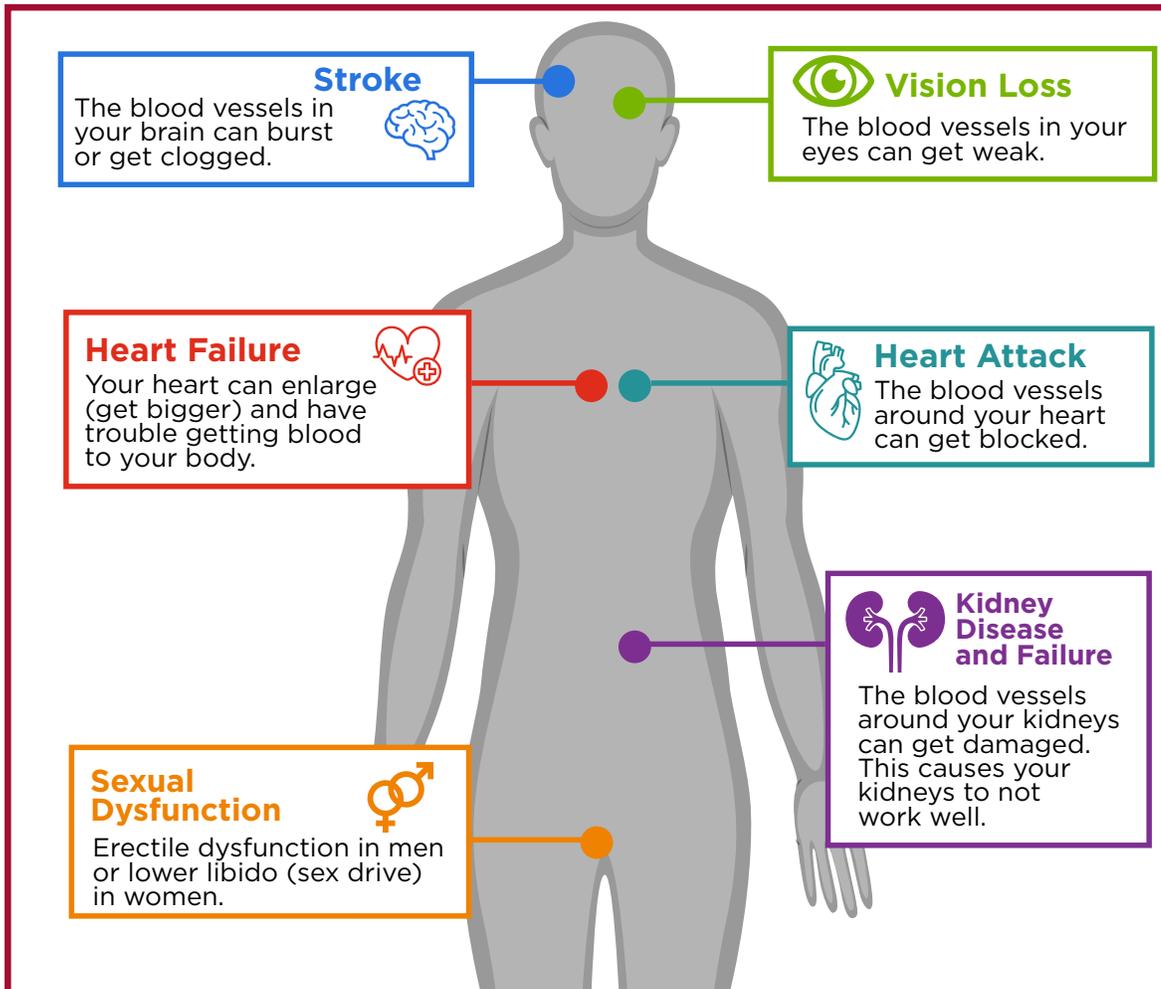
There are many things that can affect your blood pressure. Some you can control, but others you cannot.

Things that affect your blood pressure	
You <u>can</u> control	You <u>cannot</u> control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you smoke • If you are around secondhand smoke • If you are overweight or obese • Your diet • Your stress • How much alcohol you drink • If you exercise • How well you manage your health problems (such as diabetes or high cholesterol) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your family history of high blood pressure • Your race or ethnicity • Your age (over 45) • Your gender (male) • Your health problems (such as chronic kidney disease or sleep apnea)

How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

How can high blood pressure affect my body?

If you have high blood pressure, it can cause health problems, such as:





How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

Control Your High Blood Pressure

There are many things you can do to lower your blood pressure. Follow the tips below to lower your blood pressure.

Lose weight. For every 2 pounds you lose, you can lower your blood pressure 1 mm Hg.

Keeping a healthy weight can help control your blood pressure. A healthy weight is a BMI (body mass index) between 18.5 and 24.9. Your BMI depends on your weight and height.

Follow the DASH diet. The DASH diet can lower your blood pressure up to 11 mm Hg.

The DASH diet focuses on fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and whole grains. It also limits fat.

DASH stands for:

- Dietary
- Approaches to
- Stop
- Hypertension

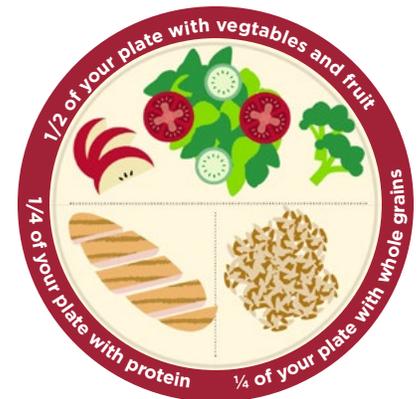
Build a DASH diet plate

Use your plate as a guide to fill it with the right kinds of foods.

- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate with vegetables and fruit
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with whole grains

Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with protein

Use the table on the next page to help you plan your meals.



How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

Food group	Servings	Serving Size	Examples
Vegetables 	As much as you want, at least 4 per day	1 cup of leafy greens ½ cup of raw or cooked vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broccoli • Brussels sprouts • Cabbage • Carrots • Cauliflower • Cucumber • Greens (all kinds) • Lettuce • Mushrooms • Onions • Peppers • Squash • Tomatoes
Fruit 	4 to 5 servings per day	1 small piece of fresh fruit ½ cup of sliced fresh, canned, or frozen fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Bananas • Grapes • Strawberries • Watermelon
Whole grains 	3 to 4 servings per day	½ cup 1 slice of bread 1 ounce of cereal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread (whole grain, high fiber) • Brown rice • Cereal • Corn • Whole wheat pasta
Protein 	3 to 6 servings per day	1 ounce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beans • Eggs • Fish and seafood • Lentils • Meat • Peas • Soy (tofu)
Dairy 	2 to 3 servings per day	1 ounce 1 cup 1 cup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese (low fat) • Fat free milk • Yogurt (low fat, low sugar)



How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

Food group	Servings	Serving Size	Examples
Healthy fats and oils 	2 to 3 servings per day	One-half 1 tablespoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avocado• Oils (avocado, olive, peanut)
Nuts, seeds, and legumes 	4 to 5 servings <u>per week</u>	½ cup cooked legumes ¼ cup nuts 2 tablespoons nutbutter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almonds• Sunflower seeds• Peanuts• Peanut butter• Beans• Lentils

Limit sodium (salt): Limiting your sodium can lower your blood pressure 5 to 6 mm Hg.

You should have no more than 1,500 mg of sodium (1 teaspoon) each day.

Follow these tips to eat less salt:

- Do not add salt when you cook.
- Try salt free seasonings.
- Avoid foods with hidden salt, such as:
 - * Canned and packaged foods
 - * Frozen dinners
 - * Deli meats
 - * Restaurant foods
 - * Condiments (such as ketchup, ranch, or mayo)
 - * Sauces (such as BBQ, soy, or steak)
- Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Choose foods with 5% or less of the Daily Value of sodium per serving.



How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

Add potassium to your diet. Adding potassium to your diet can lower your blood pressure 5 to 6 mm Hg.

You should aim to get 3,500 to 5,000 mg of potassium a day.

To add potassium to your diet, you can eat:

- Avocado (1 small = 500 mg of potassium)
- Banana (1 large = 500 mg of potassium)
- Tomato (1 small = 290 mg of potassium)
- Raisins (¼ cup = 250 mg of potassium)
- Cantaloupe (1 cup = 430 mg of potassium)
- Dried apricots (¼ cup = 200 mg of potassium)
- Kidney beans, black beans, or white beans (½ cup = 280 mg of potassium)
- Acorn squash (½ cup = 442 mg of potassium)
- Spinach (1 cup = 800 mg of potassium)
- Broccoli (1 cup = 450 mg of potassium)
- Salmon, chicken breast, or beef (3 ounces = 250 mg of potassium)

Exercise. Exercise can lower your blood pressure 5 to 8 mm Hg.

Get 30 minutes of exercise 3 to 5 days a week.

Exercise does not mean you have to go to the gym. There are many things you can do to be active. The goal is to be a little out of breath and get your heart rate up. You can:

- Ride a bike
- Walk or run
- Lift weights

Limit alcohol. Limiting how much you drink can lower your blood pressure 4 mm Hg.

- If you are a woman, you can have 1 drink a day.
- If you are man, you can have 2 drinks a day.

One drink is equal to:

- A 12-ounce beer (5% alcohol)
- 5 ounces of wine (12% alcohol)
- 1.5 ounces of hard liquor (such as tequila or vodka) (40% alcohol)

Other things you can do to lower your blood pressure:

- Quit smoking
- Avoid secondhand smoke
- Lower stress



How to Control Your High Blood Pressure

My Blood Pressure Action Plan

There are many things you can do to control your blood pressure. Work with your doctor to set goals and create your plan.

1. Why do you want to control your blood pressure? Why is it important to you?

2. Mark 1 change (described above) you want to make in your daily life.

I want to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lose weight | <input type="checkbox"/> Limit the alcohol I drink |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use the DASH eating plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Quit smoking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limit sodium (salt) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lower my stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add potassium to diet | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise | |

3. Fill in the blanks to set a goal related to the change you circled in number 2.

I will _____ (increase, decrease, add, remove) my _____
(number) _____ of _____ (steps, vegetables, drinks)
per _____ (day, week, meal).

For example: I will increase my steps to 5,000 steps per day.

I will decrease my sodium to less than 1500 mg per day.

I will decrease my alcohol use to 5 drinks per week.

4. What is 1 thing you want to change this week to work towards the goal you set?

For example: I will walk around the block 1 time per day.
I will replace my saltshaker with Mrs. Dash.

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