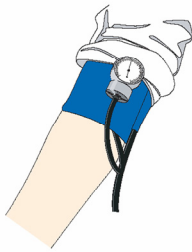


WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION)?

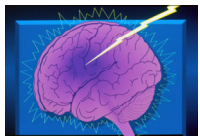


Blood pressure is the force that is created when the heart pumps blood through the blood vessels to deliver oxygen to the tissues and organs of the body. If these vessels are narrowed, or the heart is pumping too much blood, the pressure in the vessels becomes too high.

What is high blood pressure?

Blood pressure is considered high (hypertension) when your upper number (systolic blood pressure) is 140 mg Hg or higher and/or the lower number (diastolic blood pressure) is 90 mm Hg or higher. The definitions for people with diabetes, heart failure, or kidney damage are systolic above 130 or diastolic above 85 mm Hg. Elevated results should be observed on three or more readings before deciding that blood pressure is too high.

When your blood pressure remains too high over a long period of time, your heart must work harder to get oxygen where it is needed to keep the tissues in your body healthy. If the heart is overworked for too long, it may become weakened.



Another bad thing that happens when blood pressure is too high, is that one or more blood vessels may burst causing bleeding. If the bleeding is in the brain, you have a stroke.

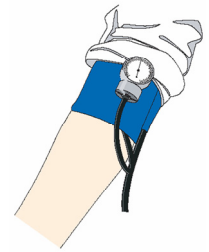
How do I measure my blood pressure?

Devices that measure blood pressure are called sphygmomanometers (*ss-fig-mo-man-om-et-ers*). To measure your blood pressure, you may want to buy your own equipment; use free equipment available in supermarkets, drug stores, and malls; or visit a healthcare provider. It is important to get all readings from the same equipment and at about the same time of day.

Self-monitoring of blood pressure offers these advantages:

1. Sorts out real high blood pressure from “white coat” high blood pressure. “White coat” refers to blood pressure that tends to be higher when a health care provider takes the reading.
2. Decides whether treatment (diet, exercise, drug, etc.) is helping.
3. Allows a record to be kept for a health provider to review. Records that people keep for themselves are a much better basis for controlling blood pressure than infrequent readings taken by a health care provider.

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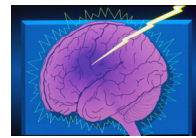


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HOW CAN I LOWER MY BLOOD PRESSURE?

Researchers estimate that every decline of 2 mm Hg in the upper (systolic) pressure, typically lowers the risk of heart disease by 5 percent and the risk of stroke by 8 percent.

MEDICATIONS: If you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure (hypertension) ask your health care provider if there is a blood pressure medication right for you.

Though certain medications can help, sometimes diet and lifestyle changes are enough to reduce your blood pressure.

DIET: The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet was developed to focus on the whole diet rather than specific nutrients. This diet is high in fruits, vegetables, and dairy products and low in fat. For more information about the DASH diet, visit the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/>

POTASSIUM SUPPLEMENTS: The use of potassium supplements should always be discussed with your provider FIRST.

WORK OUT: Regular aerobic exercise, such as jogging or brisk walking, lowers both the upper (systolic) and lower (diastolic) blood pressure.*

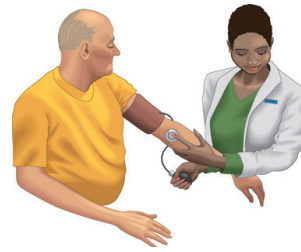
LOSE WEIGHT: Losing just 10 pounds lowers both the upper pressure (systolic) and the lower pressure (diastolic).*

SPARE THE SALT: Restricting salt intake reduces blood pressure significantly only in the 30 to 50 percent of people who are sensitive to salt. Because there is no practical way to know who the sensitive people are, people who have high blood pressure should lower their salt intake and watch for a drop in their blood pressure to decide whether decreasing salt helps.

QUIT SMOKING: Giving up cigarettes reduces blood pressure only a small amount, but giving up smoking reduces heart attack risk substantially and offers many other health benefits.

ALCOHOL IN MODERATION: Heavy drinking raises blood pressure. Take no more than one drink a day if you are a woman; two if you are a man.

*Always consult with your physician before beginning any diet or exercise program.



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