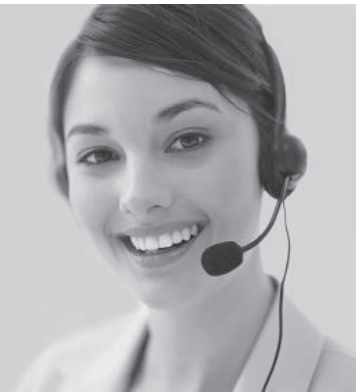


“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘About High Blood Pressure and 10 Healthy Actions That Could Save Your Life.’ I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



What is high blood pressure? What are the signs?

- High blood pressure is a chronic disease. It is also called “hypertension.” It can be managed with lifestyle changes and medicine.
- High blood pressure **often has no signs at all**. That’s why it is called a “silent killer” and why it is so important to have your blood pressure checked often.
- Some people with high blood pressure have one or more of these signs:
 - Headaches that are very, very bad or that happen often.
 - Feeling very tired.
 - Problems with eyesight.
 - Chest discomfort or pain.
 - Blood in urine.

What causes high blood pressure?

- Anyone can have high blood pressure. For most people, the cause is unknown.
- You are at greater risk of high blood pressure if you:
 - Are African-American.
 - Have a family history of high blood pressure.
 - Are obese.
 - Are pregnant.
 - Have had pre-hypertension.

Talk with your doctor before starting or increasing any exercise program. Your doctor may advise you to try certain exercises or avoid others.

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About High Blood Pressure and 10 Healthy Actions That Could Save Your Life

- Have diabetes, chronic kidney disease, thyroid disease, or sleep apnea.
- Have high cholesterol.
- Have unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as smoking, lack of exercising, or eating a lot of unhealthy food.
- Some medicines and supplements can raise your blood pressure. Examples are birth control pills; hormones to reduce menopause symptoms; some medicines for arthritis, colds, and pain; diet pill; and bitter orange. Be sure to tell your doctor about any drugs, herbs, or supplements you take.
- As we age, we all develop a higher risk for high blood pressure. Blood vessels lose flexibility with age. This contributes to increasing pressure throughout the body.
- Gender also affects risk for high blood pressure. Women are about as likely as men to develop high blood pressure during their lifetimes. But for people younger than 45 years old, more men than women have high blood pressure. For people 65 years old and older, more women than men have high blood pressure.

Why is high blood pressure dangerous?

When blood pressure stays high over time, it can damage the whole body.

- The heart can get larger or weaker. Over time, it may become less able to pump blood to the body. This is called **heart failure**.
- The blood vessels in the kidneys can narrow. This may lead to **kidney failure**.
- Blood vessels throughout the body can narrow and limit blood flow. This may cause a **heart attack, stroke, or kidney failure**. It may also lead to **amputation**.
- Blood vessels in the eyes can burst or bleed. This may lead to **changes in sight or blindness**.

But don't panic! There are many things you can do to keep your blood pressure in a healthy range.

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About High Blood Pressure and 10 Healthy Actions That Could Save Your Life

10 healthy blood pressure actions

The best way to take care of your blood pressure is to make **healthy lifestyle changes**. The same changes that can help your blood pressure can also lower many other health risks.

What if lifestyle changes aren't enough? Your doctor may prescribe one or more **medicines** to help control your blood pressure.

Below are **10 healthy blood pressure actions**. Each one can help improve your blood pressure and overall health.

1. If you smoke, quit.
2. Measure and track your blood pressure at home.
3. Take all blood pressure medicines as prescribed.
4. Eat no more than 1,500-2,400 milligrams of sodium per day. Compare labels. Choose fresh foods more often than processed foods. Use herbs and spices instead of salt.
5. Do you drink alcohol? If you are a woman, drink no more than one drink per day. If you are a man, drink no more than two drinks per day. One drink is 12 fluid ounces of beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 1.5 fluid ounces (a shot glass) of 80-proof liquor.
6. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Aim for nine servings (4½ cups) per day.
7. Eat three servings of nonfat or low-fat milk or dairy foods per day.
8. Limit the amount of fat you eat to 30% of your daily calories or less.
9. Eat the right number of calories for you so that you reach and stay at a healthy weight.
10. Be active. Build up to at least 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity, like brisk walking. *Walk as often as you can!* Do at least 10 minutes at a time.

Important: What if you are being treated for high blood pressure and your numbers are at your goal most of the time?

- This means that your blood pressure is “under control.” But it doesn't mean that you no longer need treatment. You still have the condition.
- Keep seeing your doctor. Stay on track with your lifestyle changes. Stay on any medicine(s) your doctor has prescribed. Never change your medicine(s) on your own.



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About High Blood Pressure and 10 Healthy Actions That Could Save Your Life

Getting started

The more of the 10 healthy blood pressure actions you put into practice, the better. The best way to build long-term change is to start slow and add small steps. Many people have used this approach to take care of their blood pressure. You can too!

Below are some ways to get started. Check those you would like to put into action.

- Talk with your doctor if you have any signs of high blood pressure.
- Write down your most recent blood pressure. Also record your blood pressure goal, if your doctor has given you one.

My blood pressure is _____/_____ mm Hg.

My blood pressure goal is _____/_____ mm Hg.

- Think about why you want to take care of your blood pressure and your health. Write down your top three reasons.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- If you have high blood pressure, get some kind of medical ID. An example is a medic alert bracelet.
- Set a goal with your health coach to begin to put one of the 10 healthy blood pressure actions into practice. See the Take Action box and example on the next page.



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About High Blood Pressure and 10 Healthy Actions That Could Save Your Life

Take Action

	Check when completed
<p>My SMART Goal for This Week Do your best to reach the SMART* goal you set with your health coach. Write it here. Check the box when you have completed it.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Staying on the Path to Wellness When you are ready, choose one or two tips above that you would like to put into action. Set a weekly SMART goal for each one. Write your goals here. Check the boxes when you have completed them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

*SMART goals are specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and timely. For example, “I will walk 10 minutes during my lunch hour on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.”

SMART goals help you succeed! If you have any trouble setting your weekly SMART goals, ask your health coach for help.

The information in this tip sheet is for educational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Sources:

- “Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure.” National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Institutes of Health. Available at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/hbp_low.pdf. Accessed July 10, 2015.
- “Prevention and treatment of high blood pressure.” American Heart Association. Available at www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Prevention-Treatment-of-High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_002054_Article.jsp. Accessed July 10, 2015.



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