



Blood Pressure & You

MANAGING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE



Do you have high blood pressure? More than 50 million Americans do. High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer.” This is because you may not feel any pain or have any symptoms, but still have high blood pressure.

The only way to tell for sure if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked with a blood pressure machine. The doctor or nurse usually checks your blood pressure each time you visit your doctor’s office. You should work with your doctor to keep your blood pressure lower than 140/90 at each visit. This is important even if you are taking blood pressure medicines. A blood pressure that goes above 140/90 is considered uncontrolled. This can cause heart disease, kidney disease, stroke and loss of sight.

Remember that you need to control your blood pressure 24 hours a day, every day!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

STRESS

What is stress? Stress is a feeling. Worry and stress are part of life. But people with high blood pressure have to take care of their stress because stress can cause their blood pressure levels to go up.

What can I do to ease stress? When you are stressed take the time to sit down, close your eyes, and take a few slow, deep breaths, think of something good, clear your mind of bad thoughts. Also laughter is a great way to lower stress. A good sense of humor will make stress more manageable.

Other ways to bring stress down are:

- * Exercise
- * Take a nap
- * Watch a movie
- * Read a book
- * Visit friend
- * Listen to music



PUT AWAY THE SALT SHAKER!



Eating extra salt can increase your risk of high blood pressure. Your kidneys remove extra sodium from your body. They help keep your blood pressure normal. Increasing age and salt intake make it hard for your kidneys to do the job well.



Special points of interest:

Make a commitment to control your blood pressure. Start out small, think of one thing you can do. Write it down and take it with you to your next doctor visit. Ask your doctor for other ways to safely control your blood pressure to improve your health.

HEALTHY EATING










Changing the way you eat helps manage your blood pressure. What you eat affects your whole body. Be good to yourself, and try these changes:

- ◆ Cut back on sweets and packaged snacks.
- ◆ Drink fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk instead of whole or reduced fat (2%) milk. Change to other low-fat dairy products.
- ◆ Switch to low-calorie types of foods such as spreads, salad dressings, and mayonnaise.
- ◆ Avoid fried foods. Bake, steam, or broil your meals instead.
- ◆ Eat less meat and cheese.
- ◆ Avoid high-salt foods such as smoked meats, and canned foods.
- ◆ Have several serving of fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains each day.
- ◆ When shopping, look for labels that say low salt or sodium.
- ◆ When cooking, make dishes from scratch when you can.
- ◆ Don't add salt to your food when cooking or at the table.



ACTION PLAN/TREATMENT PLAN

High blood pressure is a problem that you will have to deal with for a lifetime. Working at controlling your high blood pressure can lead to good health. You and your doctor will make a plan to help keep your blood pressure controlled. Following a treatment plan every day is not always easy. Here are some tips which can help:

- ◆ Get your blood pressure  checked as often as your doctor says.
- ◆ Take your medicine,  even if you feel fine.
- ◆ Cut down on  fat and salt.
- ◆ Talk to your doctor about whether you should limit  alcohol.
- ◆ Get physically active. Always check with your doctor before you start an exercise program. 
- ◆ Quit  smoking.
- ◆ Learn ways to cope with stress. 
- ◆ Avoid  caffeine.
- ◆ Keep your  weight down.