



## Managing Hypertension

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# Managing Hypertension

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- There is a growing evidence that the *good health of your heart* and circulation will help you to *age more successfully*.

*A man is as old as his arteries...*

Thomas Sydenham, MD (1624 -1689)

- Many of the *factors* that affect your blood pressure are *within your control*. This presentation can help you learn more about how to manage your circulatory health.



# What is Blood Pressure?

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Blood pressure is the measurement of force applied to artery walls as your heart pumps blood to your body.

- Uncontrollable factors that can affect it are:
  - Family History, Age, Gender, Race
- *Blood pressure can also be affected by:*
  - Body Weight, Smoking, Exercise Levels, Stress
- Blood Pressure is Measured in Two Numbers:
  - Systolic Pressure (the higher or top number)
    - It measures the pressure when your heart contracts
  - Diastolic Pressure (the lower or bottom number)
    - It measures the pressure when you heart relaxes

***Goal: Below 120/80 mm Hg***



# What is High Blood Pressure?

## What are the Consequences?

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- High blood pressure is when the force of the blood against the artery walls is too great.
- High blood pressure occurs when blood vessels become narrow or rigid, forcing the heart to pump harder to push blood through the body.
- When blood pressure remains high, it puts an unnecessary strain on the heart and blood vessels and can lead to:
  - Stroke
  - Blood Vessel Damage
  - Heart Attack
  - Heart Disease
  - Kidney Disease
  - Eye Damage



# Evaluation and Monitoring of Blood Pressure

Typically, high blood pressure has *no symptoms*, so it is sometimes called the “Silent Killer”.

- ***In order to evaluate your blood pressure, your physician may need these tests or ask questions about:***

- Personal and Family Health History
- Co-existing Conditions such as Diabetes
- Physical Examination
- Blood Tests
- EKG (Electrocardiogram)
- Ultrasound of the Heart

- ***When monitoring your own blood pressure, you should:***

- Check your monitor's accuracy.
- Don't measure your blood pressure right after you wake up.
- Avoid food, caffeine, tobacco and alcohol for 30 minutes.
- Sit quietly before measuring your blood pressure.
- Make sure your arm is positioned properly when measuring.
- Don't talk while taking your blood pressure.

Stage	Systolic Blood Pressure	Diastolic Blood Pressure
Normal	<120 mmHG	< 80 mmHG
Pre-hypertension	120 – 139 mmHG	80 – 89 mmHG
Stage 1	140 – 159 mmHG	90 – 99 mmHG
Stage 2	≥160 mmHG	≥100 mmHG

**What is your Stage?**

# How Can You Maintain a Healthy Blood Pressure?

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## ***To lower or maintain a healthy blood pressure:***

- Eat a Nutritious, Low Calorie, Low Sodium Diet
- Maintain an Ideal Weight
- Exercise Regularly
- Reduce Stress Levels
- Stop Smoking and Limit Alcohol Intake
- Follow Your Doctor's Advice; Take Your Prescribed Medications



***It is within your control!***

# Nutrition and Weight Management

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- *Eating a well-balanced diet* low in sodium can help you *control your blood pressure* and maintain a healthy weight.
  - Losing even 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure!
  - Losing weight has the biggest effect on those who are overweight and already have hypertension.
  - Results vary person to person, but blood pressure can be reduced up to 1 mmHG for each pound lost!
- You may consider a diet formulated for blood pressure control like the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension).
- Benefits of a lower sodium diet include:
  - Lowered Blood Pressure, Risk of Stroke & Risk of Kidney Stones
- To reduce your sodium intake, eat fresh rather than processed foods when possible and read the nutrition label to make better choices.



# Exercise and Stress Management

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*Exercise* strengthens your heart. A stronger heart can pump more blood with less effort. If your heart can work less to pump, the force on your arteries decreases, lowering your blood pressure.

- Exercise can:
  - Lower your cholesterol
  - Help keep your weight in check
  - Decrease your risk of diabetes
- *Walking is the perfect exercise!*
  - Regularly walking 30-45 minutes daily can reduce blood pressure over time.
- Always consult your physician before beginning an exercise program.

*Managing your stress levels* can also help keep your blood pressure in check. The December 2014 LifeBeats topic, [Dealing with Stress](#), has tips to manage stress but you may also try the following techniques.

- Relaxation Exercises
- Physical Activity
- Enough Sleep
- Healthy Eating
- Delegate Responsibility
- Support from Family
- Seek Professional Help when Needed





# Lifestyle Management

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## Smoking

- Smoking causes damage to the blood vessels and that adds to the risk of high blood pressure.

## Alcohol

- Excessive alcohol consumption can increase your blood pressure. Limit your intake to “moderate” amounts if you drink.
  - So, what is “moderate” intake?
    - 2 drinks a day for men
    - 1 drink per day for women
    - 1 drink = 5oz. Wine, 12 oz. beer, 1.5oz. Distilled spirits
- More alcohol than this can raise blood pressure and cause deterioration in the heart muscle

See the LifeBeats topic for next month, [Beating Addiction](#), for more on these topics.

## Doctor's Orders!

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- If your numbers indicate that you are having trouble controlling your blood pressure, *consult your doctor for help*. If together, you can manage your blood pressure through lifestyle choices, great! If not, your doctor may prescribe medication to lower your blood pressure.
- If medication is needed, there are a variety of options; your doctor will work with you to find what works best.
- Always take your medication as prescribed! Do not discontinue it without discussing it with your doctor first.

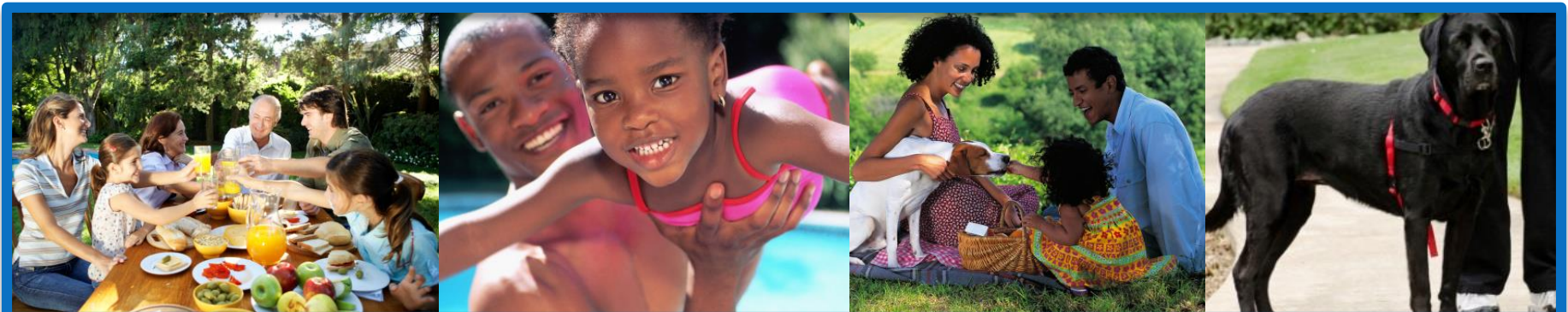


# Why Manage Your Blood Pressure?

## Benefits of Lowering Pressure

- High blood pressure can reduce your chances of aging well, and increase risk for kidney disease, diabetes, heart disease and stroke
- Normal blood pressure levels:
  - Reduce heart attack risk by 20-25%
  - Reduce heart failure risk by 50%
  - Reduce stroke risk by 35-40%
- Successful treatment of high blood pressure in middle age can decrease the risk of reduced mental function later in life.

## What or who is your reason for taking control?



## Other Chronic Disease Management Resources

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High blood pressure isn't a problem that you can treat and ignore. It's a condition you need to manage for the rest of your life. Follow these links for additional resources.

- [WebMD](#)
- [American Heart Association](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)

Blood Pressure is only one factor that can affect your long-term health. Try these links to help manage/prevent other chronic diseases.

- [Heart Disease \(EN, ES, ZH\)](#)
- [Diabetes \(EN\)](#)
- [Cancer \(EN\)](#)

You will also find resources on the LifeBeats [Focus Area Page](#).

# HEALTHY AGING

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It's in your hands!  
Start **TODAY.**



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