



Managing Hypertension

life  beats

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Managing Hypertension

- 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.

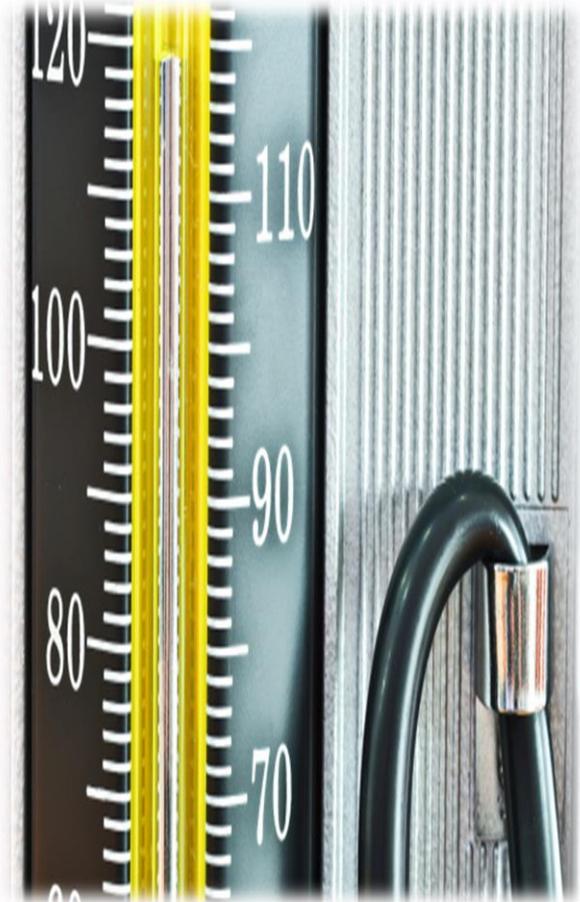


What is Blood Pressure?

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?

- 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?

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

- *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

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

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!

- 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

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](#)

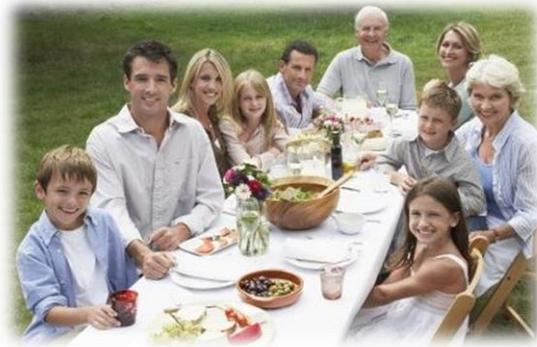
Blood Pressure is only one factor that can affect your long-term health. Try these links to help manage/prevent other chronic diseases.

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

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

HEALTHY AGING

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



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