

High Blood Pressure Fact Sheet

What is High Blood Pressure?

- A blood pressure level of 140/90 or higher is considered high.
- About two-thirds of people over age 65 have high blood pressure.
- If your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 139/89, then you may have prehypertension. This means that you don't have high blood pressure now, but you are likely to develop it in the future unless you adopt a healthy lifestyle.

High Blood Pressure Can Cause:

- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Kidney Damage
- Heart Failure
- Damage to Eyes

Blood Pressure Categories for Adults Age 18 and Older

Category*	Systolic Pressure		Diastolic Pressure	How often to have blood pressure rechecked
Healthy	less than 120	and	less than 80	Recheck yearly
Elevated	120-139	or	80-89	Recheck every 6 months
High	140-159	or	90-99	Recheck within 1 month. If still high, seek medical care within 1 month.
	160-179	or	100-109	Seek medical care within 1 month
	180 or higher	or	110 or higher	Seek medical care immediately. If immediate access to a health care provider is not possible, call 911.

* If systolic and diastolic blood pressure fall into different categories, the higher category is used to classify blood pressure.

If you are taking medicine for high blood pressure, your doctor may recommend a different schedule of visits.

Lifestyle Changes That May Prevent or Reduce High Blood Pressure

If your blood pressure is normal, you may be able to prevent high blood pressure and its complications by making simple lifestyle changes.

- Stop smoking and avoid secondhand smoke.
- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Women should limit their alcohol intake (beer, wine or mixed drink) to one drink per day, and men to two drinks a day.
- Exercise moderately 30 to 45 minutes most days of the week. Your breathing and heartbeat should be faster than usual but you should be able to talk easily.
- Reduce salt intake to 2,300 milligrams per day (about 1 teaspoon) - this includes the salt in processed foods and what you add at the table.
- Eat at least 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables each day.

Treatment for High Blood Pressure

If you have high blood pressure, you should be under regular medical care. Your health care provider may suggest lifestyle changes that can help lower blood pressure. He or she may also use medication to treat you. Talk about which drug or drugs are best.

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the prescribed medication.
- Do not reduce the dose or stop taking the medicine without talking to your doctor.
- Take medicine exactly as prescribed.

Lower Your Risk

Lifestyle changes can prevent or reduce high blood pressure.

- Stop smoking
- Lose weight if overweight
- Limit alcohol intake
- Exercise moderately most days of the week
- Reduce salt intake
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Lower high blood cholesterol
- Control diabetes

High Blood Pressure Treatment Plan

- Team up with a health care provider
- Ask questions
- Agree on a blood pressure goal
- Develop a treatment plan
- Set a timetable

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