

High Blood Pressure

Do not let high blood pressure fool you

Hypertension is the medical word for high blood pressure. High blood pressure is not about being nervous, upset or having an emotional condition. You cannot control your high blood pressure just by staying calm and relaxed. If high blood pressure is not controlled, it can lead to a heart attack, stroke, or kidney failure.

High blood pressure can be controlled by treatment. Follow your treatment plan daily even when you feel great. You can control high blood pressure and lower the risk for heart attack, stroke, and kidney problems.

What is high blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force needed to move the blood through the artery. When too much of this force is pressing against the artery walls, it is called high blood pressure. A blood pressure reading of over 140/90 is too high. The best blood pressure is 120/80. High blood pressure can damage your arteries, heart, and kidneys. High blood pressure usually runs in families. One out of four adults in this country has high blood pressure.

How can you know if you have high blood pressure

Get your blood pressure checked regularly or at least once a year by a doctor or nurse. You can look and feel terrific and still have high blood pressure. Just because a person feels well, doesn't mean his or her blood pressure is normal.

How to control high blood pressure

High blood pressure is not always cured but it can be controlled. Daily treatment usually must be continued for life in order to get your blood pressure controlled. Follow your doctor's advice, and feel free to ask questions about your treatment.

Pills are just part of the treatment

If your doctor has prescribed medication, you must take it daily to lower your blood pressure. In addition to taking your medicine, do the following:

- **Exercise** for 15 to 45 minutes at least three times every week. If you need to lose weight, you should exercise more often and for a longer time. The best kind of exercise is walking briskly, swimming, dancing, or jogging. You should warm up before exercise and cool down and stretch after exercise.
- **Lower your salt use.** Cut down on foods that have too much salt such as package snacks, processed meats, and instant soups. Avoid adding salt to foods at the table.
- **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.** Alcohol will raise your blood pressure.
- **Stop smoking.** If you smoke, ask for help to quit.
- **Get down to a healthy weight and stay there.** The more you weight you gain, the harder your heart will have to work to pump blood. Losing weight helps lower your blood pressure. Your doctor can help you decide on a weight that is healthy for you.

These lifestyle changes can help lower blood pressure. But don't try to choose your own treatment. Talk to your doctor about your plan. If you are on medicine, keep taking it while you follow the other recommendations. Don't let your prescription run out. Get it refilled.

Get your family to help out

Your family needs you. They want to keep you healthy and active. Be sure to tell them about your high blood pressure. Tell them what the doctor said to do. Your family can:

- remind you when to take your pills
- help you lose weight if you need to
- prepare meals low in salt

Some things to remember

1. A doctor or a nurse can tell you if you have high blood pressure.
2. Use less salt in the foods you eat, lose weight, stop smoking, drink less alcohol and exercise more.
3. If prescribed, take your high blood pressure pills every day. If you don't feel well after taking them, don't stop taking them but tell your doctor right away.
4. Keep appointments with your doctor to make sure your blood pressure is controlled.

HTN – LA HYPERTENSION – LIFESTYLE ADAPTATION
HTN – EX HYPERTENSION EXERCISE

5. High blood pressure often runs in families. You can help your family by having them get their blood pressure checked, the way you did.

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