

# High Blood Pressure and Children: What Parents Need to Know



## **Children can have high blood pressure.**

Did you know that children could have high blood pressure? In fact, the number of children with high blood pressure is growing. The sooner high blood pressure is found in children, the sooner it can be treated.

## **All children 3 years of age and older should have their blood pressure checked regularly.**

Having high blood pressure may not cause any symptoms. Having your child's blood pressure checked is the only way to know if he or she has high blood pressure. The normal range for blood pressure in children is usually lower than in adults. If the blood pressure is high at three health care visits, your child may need further testing.





## **High blood pressure in children needs to be treated.**

Untreated high blood pressure can cause kidney disease, heart disease, eye disease, and other serious health problems over time. The longer the high blood pressure goes uncontrolled, the more harm it can cause. Treatment begins with lifestyle changes, such as diet changes, more physical activity, and weight loss. Some children also may need to take blood pressure medicines.

## Steps to keep your child's blood pressure in the healthy range

These tips are good for all children, especially those who have or are at risk for high blood pressure:

- Give your child healthy home cooked food
- Use less canned or pre-prepared food
- Encourage physical activity
- If your child smokes or chews tobacco, talk with his or her doctor about how to help your child quit.
- Make sure that your child takes his or her blood pressure medicine if prescribed.
- You and your family can keep a healthy weight. Visit the Weight-control Information Network ([www.win.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov)), We Can!® ([wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov)), and Let's Move ([www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)) for tips for parents.

## What does it mean to eat a healthy diet?

Eating for healthy blood pressure means eating:

- less salt and packaged foods that are high in sodium, and
- more fruits and vegetables.



## Questions to ask the doctor about your child's blood pressure

- What is my child's blood pressure?
- Is it in the normal range?
- Is my child at risk for high blood pressure?

All children should have their blood pressure checked during their routine physical exams. Those with a family history of high blood pressure and being overweight need to have it checked more often.

## For more information:

### About healthy lifestyles and children

- Weight-control Information Network (WIN)  
Toll free at 1-877-946-4627  
[www.win.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov)
- **We Can!** (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition)<sup>®</sup>  
1-301-592-8573  
[wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov)
- Let's Move  
[www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)

### About high blood pressure

- The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
1-301-592-8573  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

Participants in clinical trials can play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available, and help others by contributing to medical research. For more information, visit [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov).



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The National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) encourages people to get tested for kidney disease and educates those with kidney disease and their health care providers about treatments that can help delay or prevent kidney failure. NKDEP is a program of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

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