


Control your blood pressure


Your body (and your wallet) will thank you!

Bring this sheet to your next doctor visit. 

What is high blood pressure and why is it a problem?


High blood pressure is when the force of your blood puts too much pressure on your blood vessels. If it's not treated, high blood pressure can:

- Damage your heart and other organs and lead to serious problems such as heart failure, stroke, or kidney failure
- Cost a lot in high medical bills to treat these problems

High blood pressure is like too much water going through a garden hose, which makes the hose stiff and may damage the plants it sprays. 

Luckily, you can help improve this problem over time by eating healthy foods, being active, and taking the blood pressure medicines your doctor prescribes.

Stages of high blood pressure from the American Heart Association*

Blood pressure stages	Systolic (top number)		Diastolic (bottom number)
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	or	Less than 80
High — Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
High — Stage 2	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
High — Crisis (emergency) 	Higher than 180	or	Higher than 120

top number

120

80

mm Hg

bottom number

*Based on guidelines released in November 2017

Tips to control your blood pressure

1 Visit your doctor right away if your blood pressure is Elevated or High
 Your doctor will help you create an action plan to control your blood pressure over time. Ask your doctor these questions and write the answers here:

- What are my numbers?
 - My current blood pressure: _____ / _____ - My goal blood pressure: _____ / _____
- How often should my blood pressure be checked? _____ times each _____
 (year, month, week, day)
- How can I check my own blood pressure? _____
- Will I need medicine to help lower my blood pressure? Yes No Maybe



Missouri Million Hearts is a state initiative formed to prevent 20,000 heart attacks and strokes by 2022. The partnership of key health organizations in Missouri raises awareness by highlighting the cooperation and individual work of the partners to achieve the shared goal of saving lives from heart disease and stroke.

2 Get active for 30 minutes most days of the week



- Walk or jog in my neighborhood
- Rake leaves or shovel snow
- Dance
- Go on a bike ride
- Swim laps
- Jump rope
- Play volleyball
- Other: _____

3 Eat healthy foods



- Ask my doctor what would be a healthy weight for me
- Work with my doctor or a dietician to make a healthy eating plan
- Eat less junk food, such as chips, fast food, or sweets
- Eat more fruits and vegetables, such as apples, oranges, or broccoli
- Eat lean meats, such as fish, lean ground beef, or pork tenderloin
- Keep a diary of what I eat and drink

4 Eat less than 2300mg (about 1 teaspoon) of salt each day



- Buy fresh meats and vegetables to cook
- Use herbs and spices instead of salt to add flavor to my food
- Cut down on the amount of restaurant food, and packaged foods I eat
- Look at package labels for phrases like “low sodium” or “no added sodium”
- Don’t eat frozen dinners, salad dressings, or canned soups
- Drink at least 6 glasses of water a day

5 Limit alcohol, don’t smoke, know your numbers




- Drink less than 1-2 servings of alcohol each day (a serving is a 12 ounce glass of beer, a 5 ounce glass of wine, or a 1½ ounce shot of a hard liquor)
- Quit smoking – I’ll call the free Tobacco Quitline: **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669) or work with my doctor
- Know my blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels

Learn more

Visit these websites and enter “high blood pressure” in the site’s Search box:

 Million Hearts:
millionhearts.hhs.gov

 American Heart Association:
heart.org

 Mayo Clinic:
mayoclinic.org