

# Using medicines to control your high blood pressure



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

So, your doctor says you have high blood pressure. This means the force of your blood puts too much pressure on your blood vessels.

High blood pressure usually doesn't cause symptoms you notice, but if it's not treated it can:



Damage your heart and other organs and lead to serious health problems such as heart failure, stroke, or kidney failure



Cost a lot if you get one of these health problems and have high medical bills

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

## 3 ways to control your blood pressure

### 1 Work with your doctor to make an action plan

Your doctor will help you create an action plan to control your blood pressure over time. Ask your doctor the questions on this checklist and write the answers on the lines below.

- What are my numbers?

★ **Goal: Lower my blood pressure to** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

My blood pressure was checked on:	My blood pressure was:
Date: _____	Blood pressure: _____ / _____
Date: _____	Blood pressure: _____ / _____
Date: _____	Blood pressure: _____ / _____
Date: _____	Blood pressure: _____ / _____

- How often should my blood pressure be checked? \_\_\_\_\_ times each \_\_\_\_\_ (year, month, week, day)
- How can I check my own blood pressure? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 Take your blood pressure medicine

Your doctor has prescribed 1 or more medicines to help lower your chance of heart disease and stroke. Talk to your doctor if your medicines cause side effects that bother you, such as upset stomach or muscle pain.




- Keep taking your medicines** until your doctor says you can stop – stopping on your own may be dangerous.

- **My blood pressure medicines** (if you take more than 2 medicines, write them on another sheet)

<p><b>Name of medicine 1:</b></p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Special instructions</b> (such as take with food, avoid any food or drink, possible side effects)</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>What times to take it:</b></p> <p>_____ am/pm _____ am/pm _____ am/pm</p>	<p><b>Get a refill</b> every _____ month(s)</p>
<p><b>Name of medicine 2:</b></p> <p>_____</p>	<p><b>Special instructions</b> (such as take with food, avoid any food or drink, possible side effects)</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>What times to take it:</b></p> <p>_____ am/pm _____ am/pm _____ am/pm</p>	<p><b>Get a refill</b> every _____ month(s)</p>

### 3 Get active and eat healthy foods

You'll help your medicines work better with healthy choices. Check actions you're ready to take:





- Work with my doctor or a dietician to make a healthy eating plan
- Be active for 30 minutes a day most days of the week
- Eat less than 2300mg (1 teaspoon) of salt each day by eating more fresh fruits, veggies, and home-cooked meals and fewer packaged foods and restaurant meals
- 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



### Learn more

Visit these websites and enter "high blood pressure" in the site's Search box:

 Million Hearts:  
[millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov)

 American Heart Association:  
[heart.org](http://heart.org)

 Mayo Clinic:  
[mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org)