

Small Steps To Take Control of Your Blood Pressure

Every time your heart beats, it pumps blood through vessels, called arteries, to the rest of your body. Your blood pressure is how hard your blood pushes against the walls of the arteries. If your blood flows at higher than normal pressures, you may have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. Hypertension is a significant risk factor for heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. Millions of Americans have high blood pressure, yet many are unaware of it. That's why regular blood pressure checks, at least once a year, are essential.

CERTAIN FACTORS CAN INCREASE OUR RISK OF DEVELOPING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.



- **Age:** Blood pressure tends to get higher as we get older. But it can affect many of us when we're younger too.
- **Genes:** High blood pressure often runs in families.
- **Sex:** Before age 60, more men than women have high blood pressure. After age 60, more women than men have it.
- **Lifestyle habits:** Eating too much salt, drinking too much alcohol, being obese, smoking, and not getting enough exercise can raise our blood pressure.



WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE?

- **Eat Healthy Foods**

A diet low in sodium and saturated fat—like the DASH eating plan—can lower your blood pressure as effectively as medicines.

- **Move More**

Get at least 2½ hours of physical activity a week to help lower and control blood pressure. That's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

- **Aim for a Healthy Weight**

Losing just 3 to 5 percent of your weight can improve your blood pressure. If you weigh 200 lbs., that's a weight loss of 6 to 10 lbs.

- **Manage Stress**

Stress can contribute to high blood pressure and other heart risks. If it goes on for a long time, it can make your body store more fat.

- **Stop Smoking**

The chemicals in tobacco smoke can harm your heart and blood vessels. Quitting is hard. But many people have done it, and you can, too.

For more information on steps to control your blood pressure, visit:

heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure



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