

High blood pressure?

Here's what you can do



Consider buying a blood pressure monitor at your pharmacy. Take your blood pressure at home and keep a record of all readings.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, occurs when the pressure of blood against the artery walls is higher than normal. Often called “the silent killer,” high blood pressure usually has no symptoms and increases your risk of stroke, heart attack, and kidney disease. It is a dangerous condition when left untreated. The good news is that you can lower your blood pressure by making changes in your lifestyle and by taking medication if necessary.

Get more active

Start with increasing your activity. Being more active is good medicine. Even 5 to 10 minutes of walking is a good start. Over time, try building up to 30 to 45 minutes a day doing whatever exercise you enjoy most.

Exercising . . .

- may directly lower your blood pressure
- is a great way to cope with stress and helps you feel better
- helps you lose weight

Maintain a healthy weight

If you are overweight, losing weight can help reduce your blood pressure. Unfortunately, there is no magic way

to lose weight. Research shows that fad diets, prescription medications, herbal supplements, and starvation diets do not work for the long term. People who are successful at losing weight and keeping it off for the long-term . . .

1. become more physically active
2. develop healthy eating habits
3. adapt healthy behaviors little by little and stick with them over time

Stop smoking

If you don't smoke, great! If you do smoke, becoming a non-smoker may be the most important step you can take for your health. Quitting smoking will help to lower your blood pressure.

Eat more fruits, vegetables, grains, and beans

- Eat more whole grains, such as 100 percent whole wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal.
- Eat more vegetables and fruit.
- Use only half the butter or margarine you do now.
- Increase fat free and low-fat dairy products to two to three per day.
- Treat meat as one part of the whole meal instead of the main focus.



Limit alcohol

Limit alcohol to one drink per day if you are a woman and no more than two drinks per day if you are a man.

1 drink =

- 4-5 ounces of wine

or

- 12 ounces of beer

or

- 1 mixed drink

Limit salt

- Limit sodium to 2400 mg per day.
- Read food labels to select foods lower in sodium.
- Limit high sodium foods like convenience foods and fast foods.

Know your target blood pressure

- Discuss your target blood pressure with your doctor or other medical professional.
- Consider buying a blood pressure

monitor at your pharmacy. Take your blood pressure at home and keep a record of all readings.

- Bring your blood pressure record to your next visit with your doctor or other medical professional.

You don't have to do it alone

Contact your Health Education Department for help on how to . . .

- lose weight, if needed
- stop smoking
- start an exercise program
- change your food choices to be lower in fat and salt and higher in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- read food labels
- limit alcohol consumption
- take your blood pressure at home

Your Health Education Department has programs, books, pamphlets, videos, workshops, and classes to help you get started.



Other resources

- Connect to our Web site at members.kp.org. Here you'll find the Health Encyclopedia, which offers more in-depth information on this and many other topics.
- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- Listen to the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone at 1-800-332-7563. For TTY, call 1-800-777-9059.
- Visit your facility's Health Education Department for books, videos, classes, and additional resources.

Track your blood pressure

My target BP: Systolic _____
Diastolic _____

Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse	Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse
Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse	Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse
Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse	Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse
Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse	Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse
Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse	Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse
Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse	Date	Systolic / Diastolic	Pulse

Adult blood pressure levels (mmHg*)

Category	Systolic	Diastolic
Normal	119 or less	79 or less
Prehypertension	120-139	80-89
Hypertension	140 or higher	90 or higher

*millimeters of mercury

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other medical professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have further questions, please consult your doctor.