

BLOOD PRESSURE AND YOU

High Blood Pressure and You

Blood Pressure is a measure of the force of blood against the walls of your arteries.

Blood pressure readings include two numbers:

The first number is called the systolic pressure and is a measurement of the force of blood on the artery walls as your heart pumps blood to your body.

The second number is called the diastolic pressure and it is a measurement of the force of the blood on the artery walls between heart beats, when your heart rests.

If your blood pressure is usually above 140/90, you have hypertension. High blood pressure normally does not cause headaches, dizziness, or lightheadedness - It usually has no symptoms.

What can you do about high blood pressure?

Lifestyle changes and medications can help you reach your blood pressure goals.

1. **Always take your medication as prescribed.**

You may be prescribed an ACE or ARB medication that is used to control blood pressure by allowing the blood vessels to relax and open up, reducing blood pressure.

2. **Call your physician if you think your are having a problem with your medications.**

You may need to take one or more types of medication to lower your blood pressure.

If you stop taking your medication, your blood pressure will go back up. There is no "cure" for high blood pressure.

3. **See you physician regularly.**

Talk to your Doctor before taking decongestants or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like Ibuprofen, Antacids, Lithium, or herbal remedies. Some medication can raise your blood pressure or interact with blood pressure medications.

4. **Stay at a healthy weight.**

Try to do moderate aerobic activity (like walking) at least 2 ½ hours per week.

5. **Drink alcohol moderately.**

2 drinks a day for men,
1 drink a day for women.

6. **Eat healthy.**

Eat fresh fruits, vegetable healthy fats, and lowfat dairy foods. Try to limit the amount of sodium you eat to less than 1,500 mg a day.

7. **Do not smoke.**

Smoking increases your risk for heart attack and stroke.

When should you call for help?

- If your blood pressure is much higher than normal (such as 180/110 or higher)
- You think your high blood pressure is causing severe headaches, blurry vision, or irregular heartbeats.