

WEEKLY WELLNESS NEWS



TAKE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE TO HEART.

May is National High Blood Pressure Month. High blood pressure (hypertension) affects nearly 1 out of 3 Americans. It is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly by a health professional.

High blood pressure contributes to ~1,000 deaths per day.

What is Blood Pressure?

As your heart pumps blood through your body, blood is pushed up against blood vessel walls. This measure of force is your blood pressure.

Why is it Important?

Blood pressure is important because the higher it is now, the higher your risk of health problems are in the future. If your blood pressure is high, that means there is extra strain on your arteries and heart. Over time, this strain can cause the arteries to become thicker and less flexible, or weaker.



Check.



Change.



Control.

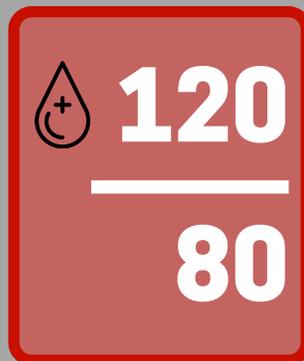
Did You Know?

Check. Change. Control. is a free online self-monitoring program that tracks blood pressure readings at home to help you achieve and maintain a healthy heart. Sign up today to start managing your heart health and get connected with a coach. For more information visit <https://www.ccctracker.com/>.



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KNOW YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE NUMBERS



Systolic Pressure

This number measures the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats.

Diastolic Pressure

This number measures the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

Knowing what your blood pressure numbers are and what they mean is the first step to keeping them in check.

Blood Pressure Categories



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

- About 75 million American adults have high blood pressure - *that's 1 in every 3 adults.*
- At 50, total life expectancy is five years longer for people with normal blood pressure.
- Of those with high blood pressure, only half have it under control.

NOTE: Use this chart as a guideline, however, a diagnosis of high blood pressure must be confirmed with a medical professional.

High Blood Pressure - The Silent Killer

High blood pressure usually has no warning signs or symptoms, so many people don't realize they have it. Untreated hypertension increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. It can also damage the kidneys and increase other risks such as blindness and dementia. This is why high blood pressure is referred to as a "silent killer".

Blood Pressure Monitoring

It's not a bad idea to purchase a blood pressure cuff so that you can check your own blood pressure at home. Even if you don't have high blood pressure, it's good to see what your pressure is so you know what is considered 'normal' for your body.



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HEART HEALTH MATTERS



Normal Blood Pressure is Below: **120/80**



Nearly **1 in 6** American adults with high blood pressure don't know they have it.



High Blood Pressure increases your risk of having a stroke.

• **Stroke happens** when there is a **blockage** or **rupture** that interrupts blood flow to the brain. Without oxygen-rich blood, brain cells die causing **irreversible damage**.



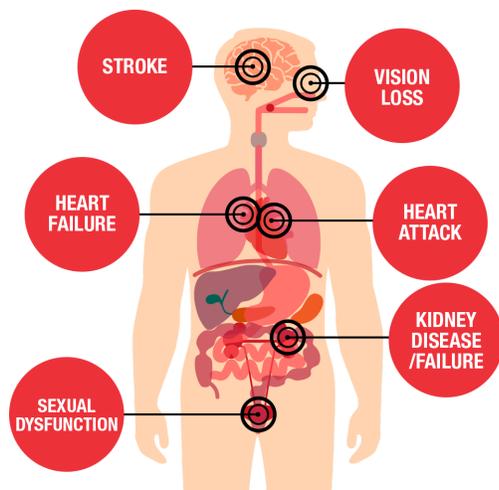
• At age 50, people without high blood pressure have a life expectancy **5 years longer** than people with high blood pressure.

80% of strokes can be **prevented**.

Hypertension's Effects on Your Body

High blood pressure can quietly damage your body for years before symptoms develop. Left uncontrolled, you may wind up with a disability, a poor quality of life or even a fatal heart attack. **Roughly half of people with untreated hypertension die of heart disease related to poor blood flow, and another third die of stroke.**

A stroke occurs when part of your brain is deprived of oxygen and nutrients. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke by damaging and weakening your brain's blood vessels, causing them to narrow, rupture or leak. High blood pressure can also cause blood clots to form in the arteries leading to your brain, blocking blood flow and potentially causing a stroke.



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STEPS FOR IMPROVING HEART HEALTH

Risk Factors

Taking control of your heart health requires understanding what factors may put you at risk for heart disease. A risk factor is a condition or behavior that increases a person's chances of developing a disease. Some risk factors that can affect heart health include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, excess weight, family history of heart disease, preeclampsia, unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, prediabetes and diabetes. For every risk factor a person has, their chances of developing heart disease is increased. By opting to make healthier choices you can decrease your risk.

Eat a Balanced Diet

A balanced diet consists of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low fat dairy, protein and oils along with other foods that are high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats like canola, corn, olive, safflower, sesame, sunflower, and soybean oils. It is important to limit consumption of added sugars as well as saturated and trans fat.

Stay Active

Exercising regularly can result in weight loss, improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reduced stress, improvements to mental health and minimized risks for diabetes, and cancer. Adults should be active a minimum of 150 minutes weekly. The time can be divided up into small sessions (ex: 30 minutes 5 days a week). Remember to always consult your doctor before engaging in a new exercise regimen.



Stress Management

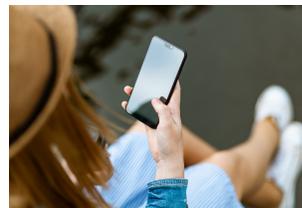
In some instances, stress can lead to a heart attack. Instead of allowing stress to build up, try some healthier ways to cope, such as speaking with a professional counselor, joining a program that helps you develop stress management techniques, exercising and/or speaking with a friend, family member, religious support group or mentor.



Get Adequate Rest

An ample amount of sleep is necessary for good health. While sleeping, the body works to repair and maintain bodily functions. Over the course of time, lack of sleep can contribute to chronic diseases.

Adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night to be well-rested.



Set Work-Life Boundaries

Try not to check your email from home. Turn off your work phone during weekends.

"Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop." - Ovid

