



"Excellence in Home Care"

Hypertension Education

www.BethanyHealthcare.com

What is Hypertension?

Blood pressure is the amount of force exerted by the blood as it moves against the vessel walls, and is carefully regulated by the body. Medical guidelines state that a normal blood pressure for most adults is less than 120/80 mm Hg (milliliters of mercury, a measurement of blood pressure). If your blood pressure is above 140/90 mm Hg, you have high blood pressure. Your healthcare professional may call it by its medical term, "hypertension."

Your heart will beat about 100,000 times today. Each time your heart beats, it pumps blood through your body's arteries. The force of blood against the inside walls of your arteries and your arteries' resistance to blood flow create blood pressure. If blood pressure is too great it can damage the vessels and restrict blood flow causing damage to the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, and other parts of your body. That's why it is important to reduce your blood pressure.



A blood pressure reading is shown as two numbers. These numbers measure the pressure against the walls of your arteries. The two numbers are usually written as a fraction, such as 140/90 or 160/110.

The top number of your blood pressure reading measures the pressure against the walls of your arteries when your heart is pumping blood to your organs. Your healthcare professional may refer to your top number as your **systolic pressure**. The bottom number of your blood pressure reading measures the pressure against the walls of your blood vessels when your heart is between beats and resting. This number is known as your **diastolic pressure**.

Risk Factors

There are a number of factors that may cause an individual to develop high blood pressure, including:

- Age: men over the age

of 45 and women over age of 55

- Smoking
- Excess weight
- High cholesterol
- Kidney disease
- Thyroid disease
- Birth control pills
- Hormone replacement
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Vision loss
- Diabetes
- Little exercise
- People of African-American descent (especially women)
- Family history; people who have blood relatives who have high blood pressure (mother, father, sister).

Some of these factors you can control such as diet (limiting your salt intake) and exercising on a daily basis.

The Blood Pressure Success Zone

The blood pressure success zone is defined as blood pressure less than **140/90 to 120/80 mm Hg or below**.

When you're in the BP Success Zone, your blood is flowing more easily throughout your body, and your vital organs are getting the blood they need more easily.

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Symptoms

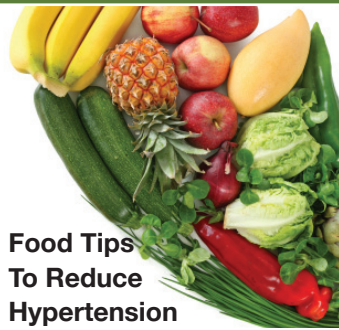
Some people think that the symptoms of high blood pressure are frequent headaches and dizziness. Though you may feel these things, most people with high blood pressure have no symptoms. That is why it is important to monitor your blood pressure regularly. If you know your blood pressure is too high, see your doctor to get it under control.

Treatment

Treating hypertension is primarily about making healthier choices like exercising and eating a healthier diet. Though these may be helpful, some people may need medications to get them to their target blood pressure. Your doctor may prescribe anti-hypertension drugs which may include ACE inhibitors, alpha or beta blockers, angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs), calcium channel blockers, vasodilators, and diuretics which help the body rid itself of high levels of sodium.

Living with Hypertension

While you can't change your genes, you can eliminate daily habits that may



Food Tips To Reduce Hypertension

Aim to eat a diet rich in:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole-grain, high-fiber foods
- Fat-free and low-fat (1%) dairy products
- Beans
- Skinless poultry and lean meats
- Fish, especially fatty fish contain omega 3 fatty acids such as salmon, trout and herring (eat at least twice a week)

Aim to eat a diet low in:

- Saturated and trans fats
- Sodium

Limit: added sugars

DASH Diet

Learn about the DASH diet (www.dashdiet.org) which can help to lower blood pressure by providing more key nutrients, such as potassium, calcium, and magnesium, all of which are associated with lower blood pressure.

contribute to hypertension. Review the diet tips in the column (at left) to see how you can start eating healthier today.

Bethany HomeHealth Can Help

The nurses and therapists of Bethany HomeHealth care for patients with conditions such as heart disease, COPD, stroke, and diabetes, all of which may be complicated by hypertension. As part of a coordinated care program with your physician, your skilled nurse will monitor your blood pressure and coordinate care for your specific condition, by providing:

- Skilled nurse visits to assess your signs and symptoms.
- Occupational therapists who work with skilled nurses to conserve your energy and use it more efficiently.
- Telephone calls to patients to help identify problems early and reduce re-admittance to the hospital.
- Teaching about your condition and monitoring your weight and diet.
- Communicate problems directly to your physician.

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