

Control Your Blood Pressure



CHALLENGE

Practice healthy habits to manage blood pressure

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Control Your Blood Pressure."
2. Practice healthy lifestyle habits to control your blood pressure.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Forty-year-old Andy Jones was always on the go. With a young family and long hours as a package-delivery driver, he felt like he had to cut corners to keep up.

He started grabbing fast food for a bite to eat, instead of making better food choices. He gained weight and wasn't very active. But he still felt like he was in pretty good health.

Then one day, he knocked on someone's door to make a delivery. Without warning, he felt dizzy and fell down. With all the salty foods, weight gain, lack of exercise, and other bad habits, Andy's blood pressure was so high it was dangerous. And he didn't even know it. He had a stroke, and it took months to recover.

"I wish I had known I had high blood pressure," says Andy. "I would have done something about it and would have probably prevented the stroke."

High blood pressure is bad for your heart, and your health. And it's a problem for a lot of people. But it doesn't have to be. Healthy habits can help you manage your blood pressure. Take the month-long health challenge to Control Your Blood Pressure.

Test Your Blood Pressure IQ

How much do you know about blood pressure and your health? Take this quiz to find out:



T F

1. An ideal blood pressure reading is less than 120/80.
2. High blood pressure is called "the silent killer" because there are usually no symptoms.
3. Eating foods high in potassium and low in sodium can help control blood pressure.
4. You shouldn't exercise if you have high blood pressure.
5. High blood pressure can harm your heart, kidneys, eyes, blood vessels, and brain.

How did you do? In most cases, healthy habits can help control blood pressure. Your weight, food choices, exercise habits, sleep patterns, alcohol use, and other factors can all have an impact on it. When that's not enough, medicine can help.

Answers: 1.True, 2.True, 3.True, 4.False, 5.True

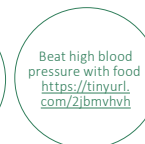
High Blood Pressure: The Silent Killer

Did you know about half of all adults in the United States have high blood pressure?¹ That's about 116 million people, but only one in four have their blood pressure under control.

Many don't even know they have high blood pressure. It's one reason high blood pressure is sometimes called "the silent killer." And it's why your blood pressure gets checked every time you visit the doctor.

Left unchecked, high blood pressure can lead to:²

- Heart attack or stroke
- Heart failure
- Kidney problems
- Vision problems
- Metabolic syndrome
- Age-related memory loss
- And other health problems



10 Ways to Control Blood Pressure



If you have high blood pressure, you can do something about it. Studies show that lifestyle changes can make a difference.⁴ It might not be easy, but it's worth it when your health depends on it. Here are 10 things you can do:

1 Manage your weight. If you need to lose a few pounds, your diet and exercise habits can help. A healthy weight will reduce your risk for high blood pressure.

2 Limit sodium. Too much salt and sodium can raise your blood pressure. Processed foods are a big source of excess sodium for a lot of people. Eat more healthy foods. Avoid or limit things like fast food, microwave meals, and processed meals. Limit your sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day.

3 Be active. Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of exercise a day. Take a walk. Ride a bike. Use your treadmill. Or take a class at the gym. Exercise will help control blood pressure. It will also help lower your risk for heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

4 Avoid or limit alcohol. Even a little alcohol can raise your blood pressure and risk for other diseases. If you do drink, follow these guidelines. No more than one drink per day for women, zero if pregnant. No more than two drinks per day for men.

5 Get enough potassium. Eating foods high in potassium can help control blood pressure. You need about 4,700 mg a day for best health. Try sweet potatoes, bananas, prune juice, pinto beans, and beet greens.

6 Eat a healthy diet. Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, low-fat dairy products, and foods that have healthy fats. Studies show that an eating plan like the DASH Diet or the Mediterranean Diet can be good for blood pressure and heart health.⁵ Aim for 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

7 Get your Zzzs. Good sleep habits can help control blood pressure. Adults need 7 to 8 hours daily. If you're not getting enough sleep, take a closer look at your bedtime routine. Eating late at night, watching TV in bed, or using a mobile device in bed can disrupt sleep.

How's your blood pressure?



A healthy or normal blood pressure is less than 120/80. If it's higher than that, you may have elevated or high blood pressure.

The good news: Making changes to your diet, exercise habits and lifestyle can help control blood pressure. However, you may need medicine in addition to diet and lifestyle changes to control blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Basics³

Blood Pressure	Systolic mmHG (upper#)	Diastolic mmHG (lower#)
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	Less than 80
High (Stage 1)	130-139	80-89
High (Stage 2)	140 or higher	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (see a doctor immediately)	Higher than 180	Higher than 120

8 Don't smoke, or quit if you do. Every time you inhale smoke from a cigarette, your blood vessels constrict and your blood pressure rises. The only helpful approach is to be tobacco free. You should also avoid secondhand smoke.

9 Take medicine, if needed. Some things raise your risk of high blood pressure, like age, family history, and race. When healthy habits can't control your blood pressure, you might need medicine. Follow your doctor's advice.

10 Manage stress in healthy ways. Anger and stress can lead to high blood pressure. Meditation, yoga, and exercise can help. Laughter, a hot bath, massage therapy, or enjoying a hobby can help, too.

Get active to control blood pressure
<https://tinyurl.com/4zrt9rsy>

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Facts about hypertension. From: <https://tinyurl.com/mr39f2wm>
- Mayo Clinic. (2022). High blood pressure (hypertension). From: <https://tinyurl.com/ytm867et>
- American College of Cardiology. (2017). New ACC/AHA high blood pressure guidelines lower definition of hypertension. From: <https://tinyurl.com/5fwdndr3>
- Aronow, W. (2017). Lifestyle measures for treating hypertension. *Archives of Medical Science*, 13(5): 1241-1243. From: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhtnpx>
- Filippou, C., et al. (2021). Effect of the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension Diet on blood pressure in adults with and without hypertension. *Journal of Hypertension*, 39:e318. From: <https://tinyurl.com/22np286j>

Control Your Blood Pressure



CHALLENGE
Practice healthy habits to manage blood pressure

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Practice healthy lifestyle habits to control your blood pressure.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to control blood pressure.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this month I practiced healthy lifestyle habits to control blood pressure
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____