

Preventing High Blood Pressure



Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of the arteries. Blood pressure rises and falls over the course of a day. When blood pressure stays elevated over time, it is called high blood pressure or hypertension.

There are a number of risk factors for high blood pressure that are related to lifestyle choices. The action items listed here can help to lower your blood pressure and decrease your risk of health complications:

High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work too hard and contributes to hardening of the arteries. It increases the risk of other health problems such as:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Congestive heart failure
- Kidney disease
- Blindness

1. Maintain a healthy weight
 - Check with your doctor to see if you need to lose weight.
 - If you do, use a healthy eating plan and physical activity.
2. Be physically active
 - Engage in physical activity 30 minutes on most days of the week.
 - Include every day activities like walking to achieve your goals.
3. Follow a healthy eating plan including foods low in saturated fats and cholesterol
4. Reduce sodium in your diet
 - Choose foods that are low in salt and other forms of sodium
 - Use spices, garlic and onions to flavor your meal without adding salt.
5. Drink alcohol only in moderation – one drink per day for women; two drinks per day for men.
6. Remember to take prescribed drugs as directed
 - If you need drugs to help lower your blood pressure, you still must follow the lifestyle changes mentioned here.

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.nhlbi.nih.gov
www.healthylife.com
www.americanheart.org