ALTITUDE

Taking Wellness to New Heights

WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

According to the American Heart Association, high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) occurs when the force of the blood flowing through blood vessels is consistently too high. It is important to learn your blood pressure and be proactive to ensure it is at a healthy level. If left untreated, high blood pressure may cause damage to your heart and pose potential threats to your heart health.[1]

Understanding Your Numbers

Next time you go to the doctor, be sure to take note of your blood pressure numbers. You can use this chart to help understand what these numbers mean for you and your well-being.[1]

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

Systolic vs. Diastolic

Systolic numbers indicate the amount of pressure your blood is applying against your artery walls when your heart is beating.[1]

Diastolic numbers indicate the amount of pressure your blood is applying against your artery walls when your heart is resting in between beats.[1]

Be sure to discuss your blood pressure numbers with your doctor before you take action or make lifestyle changes.

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DID YOU KNOW…?

- High blood pressure affects almost 30% of adults in the United States.
- Valentine's Day was celebrated for the first time around the year 500 AD.
- About 2,000 gallons of blood is pumped by your heart each day.
- Your heart beats about 115,00 times per day.
- There are 150 billion red blood cells in one ounce of blood.
- The most common blood type in the United States is O positive.
- Giraffes have a lopsided heart because the left side has to get blood up the giraffe's long neck to reach the brain.

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PREVENT AND MANAGE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

There are ways to prevent and manage high blood pressure without a prescription. However, it is important to consult your doctor regarding your specific situation and whether medication is personally necessary. Let's explore a few simple ways to prevent and/or manage high blood pressure.

Eat a balanced diet

To manage blood pressure, a crucial aspect of a balanced diet is to reduce salt intake, as well as to decrease the amount of red meats, saturated and trans fat, and sweets you consume. Focus on incorporating items into your diet such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, low-fat dairy products, poultry and fish.[2]

Maintain a healthy height

When your weight increases, your blood pressure may also rise. Excess weight can cause strain on your heart. Losing as little as 5-10 pounds can lower your blood pressure.[2]

Exercise regularly

Consistent physical activity leads to stronger muscles and, more importantly, a stronger heart. When you have a strong heart, it's easier for blood to pump through blood vessels. If your heart is not working as hard to pump blood, it lowers your blood pressure. The type and amount of exercise does not need to be strenuous, so long as your heart rate and breathing increases.[3]

Reduce stress

When you're stressed, your body produces hormones that cause your heart to beat faster and your blood vessels become narrow. This can make it difficult for blood to travel through blood vessels and can lead to higher blood pressure.[4]

Drink in moderation

Drinking too much alcohol may cause your blood pressure to rise. Limit the amount of alcohol you consume to no more than two drinks per day.[5]

Quit smoking

Smoking increases your heart rate while also narrowing your arteries, which causes buildup of plaque. This means your heart is working much harder to pump blood through your vessels.[6]

[1] The Facts About High Blood Pressure. Retrieved from: https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/the-facts-about-high-blood-pressure
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[3] Exercise: A drug-free approach to lowering high blood pressure. Retrieved from: https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure/art-20045206
[4] Stress and high blood pressure: What's the connection?. Retrieved from: https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/stress-and-high-blood-pressure/art-20044190
[5] High Blood Pressure Prevention. Retrieved from: https://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/guide/preventing-high-blood-pressure
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