

Controlling Your Blood Pressure

Take care of your high blood pressure to lower your risk of heart attack or stroke.

What is high blood pressure?¹

Blood pressure is the force of blood against artery walls. A doctor or nurse measures your blood pressure levels. A level of 140/90 or above is considered high. High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work too hard.

You can lower your blood pressure.^{2, 3}

Lower your blood pressure over time by taking small steps each day. It's that simple.

- Use less salt, soy sauce and fish sauce on foods and in cooking.
- Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Be more active. Walk with your family or a friend.
- Lose weight if you are overweight. Ask your doctor for safe tips on working out.
- Quit smoking. Ask your doctor for help or join a program (call 1-800-QUITNOW for more details). Stick with it and you'll feel better!
- Drink less coffee and soda with caffeine. Switch to herbal tea and water. Drink less alcohol.
- Reduce stress. Take time to relax and smell the flowers.
- Take your medication exactly as your doctor prescribes it.
- Replace shortening in a recipe with applesauce, mashed bananas or yogurt.
- Use nonfat or low-fat milk. These are healthier choices than whole milk.



Ask your doctor how to control high blood pressure.⁴

Your doctor can help answer all your questions. Make sure to ask:

- How often should I have my blood pressure checked?
- How often should I come in for a checkup?
- Do all my medications work well together?

Take steps to learn more.

You have the power to control your blood pressure. For more facts, talk to your doctor or nurse. Or go to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp.



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Sources: ^{1,2}Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *About High Blood Pressure—What Is High Blood Pressure?* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/about.htm>

³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Preventing and Controlling High Blood Pressure* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/prevention.htm>

⁴National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, *Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure* (Accessed August 2009): http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/hbp_low/hbp_low.pdf

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