

10 Ways to Control High Blood Pressure

- ✓ Know your blood pressure. Have it checked regularly.
- ✓ Know what your weight should be. Keep it stable or below that level.
- ✓ Avoid too much salt in cooking or at meals.
- ✓ Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole-grain high-fiber foods.
- ✓ Limit alcohol intake. If you are a woman, limit yourself to one drink a day; two a day if you are a man.
- ✓ Take your medicine exactly as prescribed. Don't stop taking your pills even if you are feeling better.
- ✓ Always keep appointments with your doctor.
- ✓ With your doctor's permission, keep active.
- ✓ Encourage family members to have their blood pressure checked regularly.
- ✓ Live a normal life in every other way.

Snack Ideas: unsalted pretzels or nuts with raisins; graham crackers; lowfat and fat free yogurt and frozen yogurt; plain popcorn with no salt or butter; and raw vegetables

For More Information About Hypertension



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Hypertension Facts
www.hypertension-facts.org



American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org

**Town Of Greenwich
Department of Health**

MANAGING HYPERTENSION



**Division of Family Health
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HEART HEALTH AND HYPERTENSION

The heart, a muscle about the size of a fist, is one of the hardest working organs in our bodies. Over the course of an average life span, it beats about two and a half billion times without ever taking a break. The daily choices we make about how we live our lives determine our hearts' ability to function optimally.

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease causes 1 of every 2.7 deaths in the US today. This translates into one cardiovascular death every 33 seconds. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Connecticut.

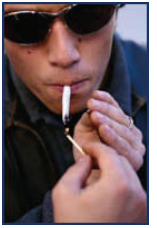
The good news is that there are steps we can take to reduce our risk. Eating a healthy, low-fat diet and getting plenty of exercise as well as cutting out bad habits such as smoking and drinking too much alcohol will help improve heart function.

Lifestyle changes can help control your high blood pressure and reduce your risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Sometimes, when lifestyle changes are not enough to control high blood pressure, your doctor will also prescribe medication.

- ❑ **MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT.** Losing weight will reduce the strain on your heart and often cause your blood pressure to drop. If you're given a diet, follow it closely. Remember, beverages like alcohol are low in nutrients and high in calories. Sugar also adds unwanted calories.
- ❑ **DECREASE SODIUM (SALT) INTAKE.** Start reading package labels regularly to learn about the sodium content of prepared foods. Seventy-five percent of the sodium Americans consume comes from processed foods. You'll also discover that herbs and spices may have salt in them too!
- ❑ **EAT FOR HEART HEALTH.** The American Heart Association recommends a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole-grain high-fiber products. A good diet should also contain fat-free and low-fat dairy products, legumes, poultry, and lean meats and fish (e.g. salmon, trout, herring). Eating these foods, especially fish, will help you consume a diet low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and salt.
- ❑ **A WORD ABOUT FATS.** Fats – especially saturated fat – affect the health of your heart and blood vessels. Saturated fat is often found in foods from animals, including fatty meats, the skin of poultry, and whole-milk dairy products. Processed foods, baked goods, snack foods, and crackers contain fatty oils like coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils. Instead of saturated fat, try margarine and canola, safflower, and olive oils. However, limit all kinds of fat to help you lose weight.
- ❑ **AVOID EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL.** Alcohol has been shown to raise blood pressure by interfering with the flow of blood to and from the heart. Alcohol pushes blood rich in nutrients away from your heart. Limit your alcohol consumption to no more than 1–2 drinks a day.



- ❑ **STOP SMOKING.** 45 million US adults smoke. Smoking takes a heavy toll on the heart. Nicotine, one of thousands of chemicals found in cigarettes, causes the blood vessels to constrict. This narrowing of the vessels increases blood pressure.
- ❑ **MANAGE YOUR STRESS.** Relaxing your mind and body may help lower your blood pressure. Stress can lead to increased smoking, alcohol consumption and overeating that raise your risk for a heart attack and stroke. A great stress-buster is getting regular physical activity like walking daily.
- ❑ **DISCUSS MEDICATIONS WITH YOUR DOCTOR.** Some medications can raise blood pressure and/or interfere with the effectiveness of drugs used to control blood pressure. Be sure to tell your doctor all of the prescribed and over-the-counter medicines you're taking.
- ❑ **GET REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.** Getting regular physical exercise will keep you healthy. Walking the dog, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, even vacuuming briskly can increase the blood flow from your heart through the blood



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