

If you are 18 years of age or older, this program can help you manage your high blood pressure and decrease the chance of developing long-term complications.

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is often called the "silent killer." That's because it often has no symptoms. But it can cause serious damage to the arteries, heart and kidneys. And if left untreated, it can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Below are some tips to help control your blood pressure.

Know your numbers

Check your blood pressure regularly. Knowing your numbers can alert you to any changes. Tracking your results over time will also help you know if the lifestyle changes you've made are working.

Your doctor may want you to self-measure your blood pressure at home. If you don't have a blood pressure monitor at home talk with your provider or a Highmark Wholcare Case Manager.

Learn what a normal blood pressure should be, as recommended by the American Heart Association.

Blood Pressure Categories



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

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Take your medications daily

Take your medicine daily, exactly as your doctor ordered. Don't run out of pills for even one day. Taking a pill every other day or splitting pills in half to make them last longer is actually decreasing your dosage. Your blood pressure can rise to dangerous levels and puts you at risk for heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney failure.

Physical activity/Exercise

Physical activity not only helps manage high blood pressure; it can help you manage your weight, strengthen your heart and lower your stress level. Try for at least 150 minutes (two hours and 30 minutes) per week of moderate-intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking. An easy plan to remember is 30 minutes a day on at least five days a week. But shorter sessions count, too. Include muscle-strengthening activity at least two days each week.

Eat healthy

Eating a heart-healthy diet is important for managing your blood pressure and reducing your risk of heart attack, stroke and other health problems.

Try to eat a diet that's rich in:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole-grains
- Low-fat dairy products
- Skinless poultry and fish
- Nuts and legumes
- Non-tropical vegetable oils

Limit:

- Saturated and trans fats
- Sodium
- Red meat (if you do eat red meat, compare labels and select the leanest cuts available)
- Sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages

Do not smoke

If you need help to quit smoking or using tobacco, call the toll-free line 1-800-748-8669 or 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Do not be around tobacco smoke. If someone in your family smokes, ask them to smoke outside.