

CONTROL YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Control your high blood pressure by checking it regularly, taking hypertension medications as prescribed, and choosing a heart-healthy lifestyle.




FDA encourages diverse participation in clinical trials.


If you think a clinical trial may be right for you, talk to your health care provider.

You can also search for clinical trials in your area at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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What is hypertension?

Hypertension (high blood pressure) develops when blood flows through your arteries at higher-than-normal pressures over time. Arteries that have narrowed because of a buildup of cholesterol make the heart and blood vessels work harder, increasing your blood pressure.

Your blood pressure measurement is made up of two numbers: systolic and diastolic. Normal blood pressure is less than 120 (systolic)/80 (diastolic) mm Hg. High blood pressure is diagnosed when you have consistent systolic readings of 140 mm Hg or higher or diastolic readings of 90 mm Hg or higher.



Hypertension is known as the silent killer because most people do not have symptoms, so it's important to have your blood pressure checked regularly. If not controlled, high blood pressure can lead to conditions such as heart disease, stroke, heart attack, heart failure, and chronic kidney disease.

MONITOR BLOOD PRESSURE AT HOME

An important part of managing your blood pressure is having it checked regularly. You can buy a blood pressure monitor for use at home at many drug and retail stores. The American Heart Association recommends automatic monitors with an inflatable cuff that squeezes your bicep (upper arm) and a monitor or gauge that shows the readings.

How is hypertension treated?

Your health care provider may prescribe one or more FDA-approved hypertension medications to lower your blood pressure to normal levels. Types of medications include:

- **Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors:** Keep blood vessels from narrowing.
- **Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs):** Keep blood vessels from narrowing.
- **Calcium channel blockers:** Allow blood vessels to relax.
- **Diuretics:** Remove extra water and sodium (salt) from your body, reducing the amount of fluid in your blood.
- **Beta blockers:** Help your heart beat slower and with less force so that it pumps less blood through your blood vessels.

You may also need to make heart-healthy lifestyle changes such as:

- Choosing foods that are lower in sodium (salt) and those that are rich in potassium
- Avoiding or limiting alcohol
- Being physically active
- Aiming for a healthy weight
- Quitting smoking



REDUCE SODIUM IN YOUR DIET

Sodium is a mineral that is one of the chemical elements found in salt. Sodium attracts water, and a high-sodium diet draws water into the bloodstream. This increases the volume of blood, leading to higher blood pressure.

Most dietary sodium (over 70%) comes from eating packaged and prepared foods. Use the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods and beverages to find foods that are low in sodium to help you manage your blood pressure. The recommended Daily Value (DV) for sodium is less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. 5% DV or less of sodium per serving is considered low, and 20% DV or more of sodium per serving is considered high.