

# *High Blood Pressure*

**Printable Materials**

# Tips to Reduce the Use of Sodium



- *Buy fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added canned vegetables.*
- *Choose food packed in water instead of broth or salt.*
- *Buy fresh garlic or garlic powder instead of garlic salt.*
- *Choose foods labeled “low sodium,” “sodium free,” or “no salt added.”*

- *Slowly cut back on the amount of salt added when cooking until you don’t use any.*

- *Add little or no salt to the water when cooking beans, rice, pasta, and vegetables.*



- *Rinse all canned products to reduce the amount of sodium.*

- *Fill the salt shaker with a mix of herbs and spices.*
- *Slowly cut back on the amount of salt added at the table or remove the salt shaker from the table.*
- *Choose fruits and vegetables instead of salty snacks like chips, fries and pork.*







## Activity Card #1

### The risks for high blood pressure and heart disease you can control are:

- Weighing too much
- Eating too much salt
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Getting too little physical activity
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Having too much stress in your life  
(only for some people and stress levels may vary)



How can you change your lifestyle habits?



## Activity Card #2

### The risks you can't control are:

- Race: high blood pressure tends to occur more often, earlier and be worse for African Americans
- Heredity: if your parents have high blood pressure, you are likely to have it, too
- Age: the older you get, the greater the risk for high blood pressure

**?** How can you reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure and heart disease?

# High Blood Pressure: What You Need to Know



## What is blood pressure?

Your blood pressure is the force that pushes blood from your heart through the veins and arteries in your body.

## What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure means the blood is pushing through the body with extra force. This may cause serious health problems such as a heart attack or stroke. You can have high blood pressure and not feel sick. The only way to know if your blood pressure is high is to have a health care provider check it. The higher your blood pressure number, the more likely you may have serious health problems.

## Know your Blood Pressure Goal:

Once your blood pressure is measured, your health care provider will tell you what your blood pressure is. They will tell you 2 numbers. For example, 120 over 89. This is written as 120/89.

**“High blood pressure is a serious condition. I’m glad I took control.”**



**Here’s what the numbers mean: the chart below can help you see where your numbers fit in.**

**Look at the first (or top) number. This is called your systolic (sys-TO-lic) blood pressure.**

120 or lower	Keep it there.
121 to 139	Make sure your lifestyle is healthy. Eat healthy and be more active.
140 or higher	See your health care provider. You’ve got High Blood Pressure.

**Look at the second (or bottom) number. This is called your diastolic (di-a-STO-lic) blood pressure.**

80 or lower	Keep it there.
81 to 89	Make sure your lifestyle is healthy. Eat healthy and be more active.
90 or higher	See your health care provider. You’ve got High Blood Pressure.

## Reasons to reach your goal.

Did you know...?

- High blood pressure may cause serious health problems such as: heart attack or stroke
- Almost one fifth of people with high blood pressure don’t even know they have it
- Nearly 1 in 2 African Americans have a high blood pressure. More than 1 in 4 Latino women have high blood pressure.

**Both the top and bottom numbers should be in the goal range. See your health care provider if your numbers are high.**

Talk with your health care provider or nurse about what your blood pressure should be. If you have diabetes, your blood pressure should be below 130/80. Ask your health care provider what you can do to help control your blood pressure.

# Action Plan for High Blood Pressure



Check off items from the list below that you will be able to change or improve. Or you can write in your own action items.

## Be active each day. Always check with your health care provider before starting any new exercise program.

- Find something you like to do most days of the week for at least half an hour. Try swimming, walking, dancing, or taking a fitness class. Then do it!
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park your car a few blocks away or get off the bus a few stops earlier

## Take your blood pressure medications.

- Take your medications the right way, each day, as your health care provider prescribed.
- Keep taking your medications unless your health care provider tells you to stop

*"I made up my mind. I set a quit date and threw out my cigarettes. It was tough at first, but I did it. Guess what? My blood pressure is lower."*



## Skip the salt.

- Use less salt when you cook and don't add salt to your meals. Add spices, herbs, or lemon for flavor.
- Check the labels when you buy prepared foods, such as snacks, canned foods, or frozen dinners. Pick foods that say "low salt" or "reduced sodium".

## Cut back on alcohol.

- Alcohol raises blood pressure. Have no more than 1-drink a day.
- Drink more water, diet soda, or seltzer

## Aim for a healthy weight.

- Eat foods that are lower in fat and calories
- Lose weight slowly if you are overweight. Lose about 1 to 2 pounds a week. Talk with your health care provider about a weight goal and weight loss program that's right for you.

## Quit smoking.

- Ask your health care provider for tips to quit smoking. Then, set a date to quit.

## Other

1. Are the items that you have chosen achievable?  Yes  No

2. What will you do to make these changes? \_\_\_\_\_

3. When will you make these changes? \_\_\_\_\_

