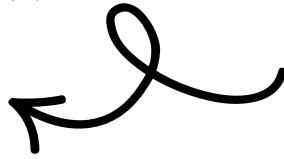


Blood Pressure

Do you have a family history of:

- ___ High blood pressure
- ___ Heart disease
- ___ Heart attack
- ___ Stroke



On a scale of 1-5, how willing are you to make healthy lifestyle changes to avoid these conditions? _____

What is Blood Pressure?

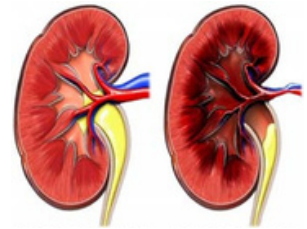
Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood against the walls of blood vessels in your body.

High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work harder than it needs to and hardens artery walls (atherosclerosis).

Atherosclerosis occurs when fat, cholesterol, and other substances build up in the walls of arteries and form hard structures called plaques. Over time, these plaques can block the arteries and make it difficult for blood to flow easily.

High blood pressure can cause many health problems, such as:

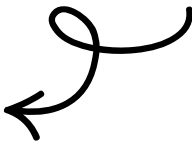
- Hardening of the arteries
- Enlarged heart
- Kidney damage
- Eye damage
- Can cause capillaries in the retina of your eye to burst, which can lead to blindness



Blood pressure is measured as systolic and diastolic pressures.

- "Systolic" is blood pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood.
- "Diastolic" is blood pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.

Ideal Blood Pressure Is less than 120/80.

Systolic  **120** / **80**  Diastolic

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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heart.org/bplevels

You'll need a blood pressure monitor for this portion of the program. Affordable options are available online and at most retail stores. If you don't have one, you're also welcome to stop by our office (SL 211) and use one of our blood pressure machines to take your reading.

What is your current blood pressure? ____ / ____

Have you been treated for high blood pressure in the past? ____ Yes ____ No

Are you currently being treated for high blood pressure? ____ Yes ____ No

How is High Blood Pressure Treated?

High blood pressure is treated with lifestyle changes and/or medications.



Medicines

Today's blood pressure medicines can safely help most people control their blood pressure. These medicines are easy to take and the side effects tend to be minor.

For most people, lifestyle changes will cause the best desired effects.

Blood pressure medicines work in different ways to lower blood pressure. These include:

- Removing extra fluid and salt from blood
- Slows down the heartbeat
- Relaxes and widens blood vessels

Are you currently taking any medications for high blood pressure? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, which of these functions does your medication perform?

****If you are unsure what function your medication performs, speak to your physician****



Lifestyle Changes for Improving Your Blood Pressure

(Mark which ones you are currently doing.)

____ **1. Eat whole foods.** Fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, healthy fats, and whole grains are all extremely nutritious and contribute to maintaining healthy blood pressure.

Mark any you consume on a regular basis:

- ____ Fruits and vegetables
- ____ Low-fat dairy
- ____ Healthy fats (olive oil, almonds)
- ____ Whole grains

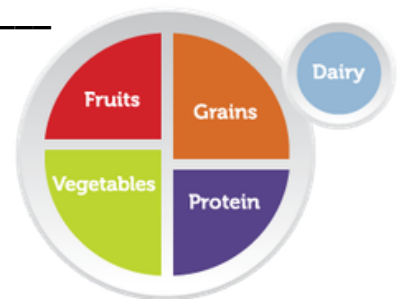


How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you consume per day? ____

How many servings of whole grains do you consume per day? ____

If you make it a goal to make most of your meals reflect the recommendations from Choose MyPlate (as pictured), you will most likely meet the recommendations for fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

If needed, how can you improve your habits of consuming whole foods?



____ **2. Exercise regularly.** Choose activities that you enjoy and are fun for you! You're more likely to stick with it if you enjoy what you're doing.

The current recommendations are:

- Moderate-intensity exercise 30 minutes/day, 5 days a week **OR**
- Vigorous-intensity exercise 20 minutes/day, 3 days a week **AND**
- Strength training 2-3 times/week, 8-10 exercises, 8-12 reps each.

How many days per week are you exercising? _____

How many times a week are you including strength training? _____

What exercises do you enjoy? _____

What time of day is best for you to exercise? _____



Benefits of Physical Activity on Blood Pressure

Regular physical activity makes your heart stronger. A stronger heart can pump more blood with less effort. If your heart can work less to pump, the force on your arteries decreases, lowering your blood pressure.

Flexibility and strengthening exercises are an important part of an overall fitness plan. However, **it takes aerobic activity to control blood pressure.** By adding moderate physical activities to your daily routine, you will see the benefits of managing your blood pressure through lifestyle choices.

Low impact aerobic exercise are especially helpful for individuals who are beginning to incorporate exercise in their routine or have knee, back, ankle, or arthritis pains. Low-impact exercise is beneficial because it places low strain on the body. **Low-impact aerobics include:**

- Walking
- Hiking
- Water aerobics
- Swimming
- Elliptical
- Biking
- Rowing

The UVU gym offers many great resources to help you with your physical activity!

- Personal trainers
- Rock climbing wall
- Indoor track
- Basketball/volleyball courts
- Multi-sport court
- Free fitness classes
- Free weights
- Machine weights
- Kettlebells & dumbbells
- Cardio machines (treadmills, stair steppers, stationary bikes, etc.)
- Resistance bands
- Bosu balls
- Jump ropes
- Balls (basketballs, soccer balls, volleyballs)
- Boxing gloves

Aim for at least **30 minutes of aerobic activity most days of the week.** If you can't set aside that much time, remember that shorter bursts of activity count too. **You can break up your workout into three 10-minute sessions of aerobic exercise and get the same benefit as one 30-minute session.**

What are some ways you can incorporate more physical activity into your daily lifestyle?

___ **3. Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight puts a lot of stress on your heart. Being in a healthy weight range will not only improve your blood pressure, it will increase your energy levels and improve your overall quality of life.

What is your current weight? ____

What is your current height? ____

Even losing 5 lbs. can lower your blood pressure. Make your weight loss goals realistic and attainable. Do what is best for your health.

If needed, what are some realistic weight management goals that you could start working on?

___ 4. Kick the salt habit. Reducing the sodium in your diet will improve cholesterol as well as decrease blood pressure.

Be mindful of your intake of pre-packaged foods. They have higher sodium and don't provide as many nutrients as can be found in foods like fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, healthy fats, and whole grains.

- Try a variety of seasonings other than salt when you're cooking. When you're done cooking, sit down and taste your food before you sprinkle salt over your entire plate.
- When you are reading a nutrition label, you want to try to keep your salt density (which is how much sodium you're taking in compared to your calories) at a ratio of 1:1.

Example: If you eat something that has 220 calories, then the most sodium content you would want to see on the label is 220 (most of the time).

Do you limit your intake of pre-packaged foods? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes

Do you enjoy seasonings other than salt? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes

When grocery shopping, do you read nutrition labels? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes

If needed, what could you do differently?



___ 5. Manage your stress. Become aware of the triggers in your life that stress you out and implement ways to keep your stress levels low. Stressful situations can cause your blood pressure to spike temporarily. It is possible that all those short-term stress-related blood pressure spikes add up and cause high blood pressure in the long term.

Focus on the things that are within your control-this can be empowering and help you relieve worry and stress on those things that you have little or no control over.

Is there anything in the past you have done that has helped you relieve stress?



There are many simple things you can do to relieve stress. Mark which ones you would like to incorporate.

_____ **Abdominal breathing exercises and progressive muscle relaxation.** Making a conscious effort to deepen and slow down your breathing can help you relax.

_____ **Exercise.** Physical activity is a natural stress-buster. Just be sure to get your doctor's OK before starting a new exercise program, especially if you've already been diagnosed with high blood pressure. Exercise not only reduces stress, but will lower your systolic blood pressure by as much as 5 to 10 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

_____ **Stretching.** Not only can yoga and meditation strengthen your body and help you relax, but they may also lower your systolic blood pressure by 5 mm Hg or more.

_____ **Shift your perspective.** When dealing with problems, resist the tendency to complain. Acknowledge your feelings about the situation, and then focus on finding solutions.

_____ **Simplify your schedule.** If you consistently feel rushed, take a few minutes to review your calendar and to-do lists. Look for activities that take up your time.

_____ **Prioritize your time based on level of importance.** What needs to be done first?

_____ **Get plenty of sleep.** Being sleep deprived can make your problems seem worse than they really are.

The goal is to discover what works for you. Be open-minded and willing to experiment. Choose your strategies, take action, and start enjoying the benefits of lowered blood pressure.

High blood pressure isn't a problem that you can treat and then ignore. It's a condition you need to manage for the rest of your life.

To keep your blood pressure under control:

- Take your medications properly. If side effects or costs pose problems, don't stop taking your medications. Ask your doctor about other options.
- Schedule regular doctor visits. It takes a team effort to treat high blood pressure successfully. Your doctor can't do it alone, and neither can you. Work with your doctor to bring your blood pressure to a safe level – and keep it there.
- Adopt healthy habits. Eat healthy foods, lose excess weight and get regular physical activity. Limit alcohol and tobacco. Find ways to manage your stress.

Sticking to lifestyle changes can be difficult, especially if you don't see or feel any symptoms of high blood pressure. If you need motivation, remember the risks associated with uncontrolled high blood pressure. It may also help to enlist the support of your family and friends.

Resources:

- Mayo Clinic
- American Heart Association