

# What it means to have high blood pressure

## Amazing facts about your heart and blood vessels

Your heart beats 100,000 times a day, pushing blood through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. These blood vessels feed vital organs — your heart, brain, eyes, and kidneys.

## High blood pressure may be damaging your blood vessels now

When blood pressure is high, it can push too hard against the walls of your blood vessels and damage them over time. The result may be a heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, or blindness.

This damage can happen silently, with no symptoms. That's why high blood pressure is called the silent killer.

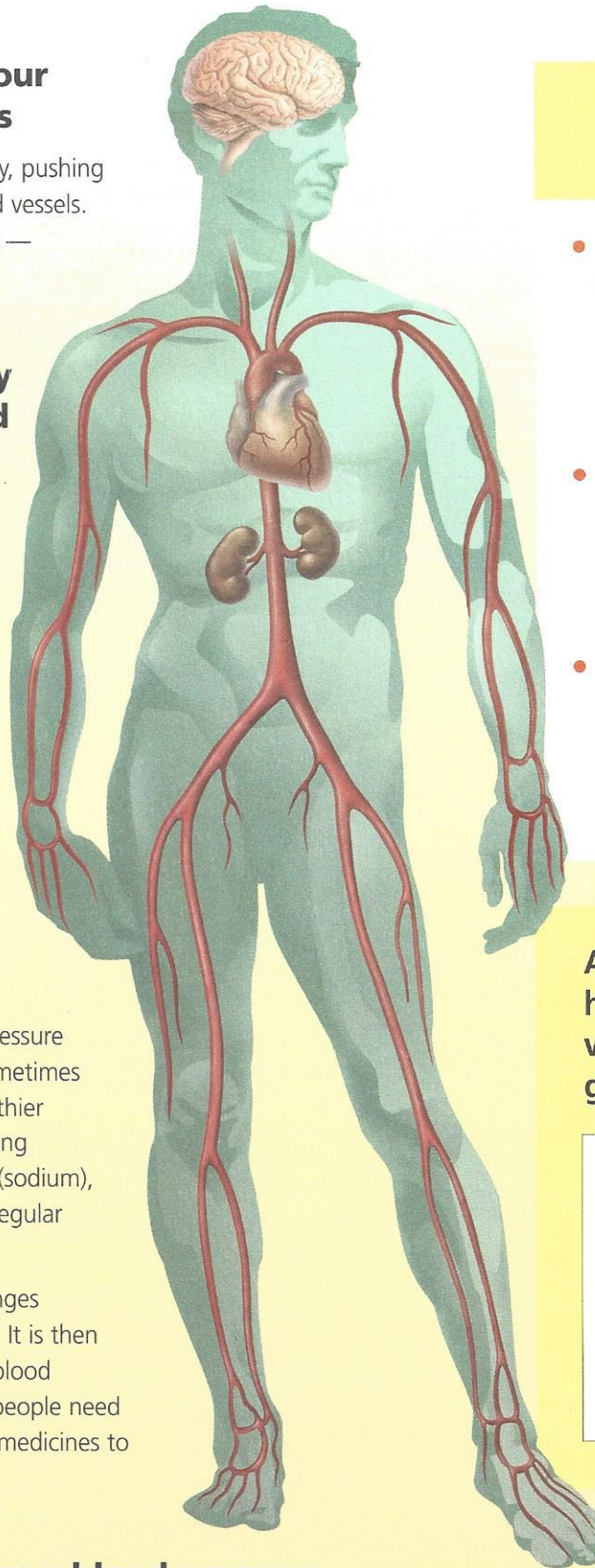
## High blood pressure can be managed

The good news is that high blood pressure can almost always be managed. Sometimes it can be managed by adopting healthier habits, like losing excess weight, eating healthy foods, cutting down on salt (sodium), limiting alcohol intake, and getting regular physical activity.

For many people, these lifestyle changes don't lower blood pressure enough. It is then necessary to add medicine to bring blood pressure to a healthier level. Many people need to take 2 or more different kinds of medicines to get to their blood pressure goal.

## Set goal numbers for your blood pressure

New medical guidelines state that normal blood pressure for adults is less than 120/80. High blood pressure medicine is recommended for numbers at or above 140/90.



## The truth about high blood pressure

- You can have high blood pressure and feel fine. Some people may not know they have it until the pressure that it places on blood vessels causes problems with their heart, brain, kidneys, or eyes.
- In many people, a specific cause for high blood pressure cannot be identified. Stress may add to your risk factors for high blood pressure, but does not cause it.
- High blood pressure is not a normal part of getting older, even though many people develop high blood pressure as they age. Nearly 60 million Americans have it.

**After talking with your health care professional, write your blood pressure goal here:**

Top number  
(called *systolic*)  
will be less than \_\_\_\_\_

Bottom number  
(called *diastolic*)  
will be less than \_\_\_\_\_

\*The medicines mentioned in this tear pad are approved to treat high blood pressure and are not approved to prevent or treat stroke, kidney disease, eye damage, and heart attack.

# What you can do to manage high blood pressure

## 1 Keep your weight in check.

- Blood pressure often increases as body weight increases.
- Losing as little as 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure.

## 2 Get moving.

- Being physically active can not only help lower your blood pressure, but it also decreases your risk of heart disease.
- All it takes is 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week. If you prefer, you can divide the 30 minutes up into three 10-minute segments.

## 3 Watch what you eat and drink.

- A healthy eating plan can help lower your blood pressure. You might want to consider the DASH diet (which stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), which includes whole grains, fish, poultry, vegetables, and nuts, and smaller amounts of fats, red meats, and sweets.
- It's also a good idea to reduce the amount of salt (sodium) in your diet.
- Alcohol can increase blood pressure. Limit alcoholic beverages to 1 drink a day if you're a woman, and 2 drinks a day if you're a man.

## 4 Take your blood pressure medicines.

- It is very important that you take your blood pressure medicines every day as prescribed.
- Blood pressure medicines can help lower blood pressure. Remember, high blood pressure can cause heart attack, stroke, and heart failure.

### Blood pressure medicines: What you need to know

- Think of your blood pressure medicines as vital to improving your health.
- Most people with high blood pressure need to take medicines in addition to making lifestyle changes.
- Many people need a combination of 2 or more medicines to reach their blood pressure goals.
- Work with your health care professional to find a plan that works for you.

**Start today to...**

**Take Action  
for Healthy BP**

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