



Control Your Blood Pressure

#EmPOWERChange



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Kick off your program with a warm welcome and your opening remarks. This could include an inspiring quote or reading or share with the group why this topic is important to you and your reason for offering to host this lesson.



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CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE | LESSON OVERVIEW

Welcome

- What is EmPOWERED to Serve?
- Program Topic and Urgent Community Need

Health Lesson: Control Your Blood Pressure

- Preventing and Managing HBP
- Having HBP Can Hurt Your Body
- Be Empowered With BP Control

Closing Thoughts

- Create A Culture Of Health
- Online Resources



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Get everyone focused by reading through the lesson overview.

Let participants know that the lesson takes 30 minutes to complete.

Call to action: Control your blood pressure. Blood pressure is important to you—and those you care about. Everyone is touched by it.

This lesson offers help for those who:

- May be at risk for high blood pressure.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Know people with high blood pressure.
- Care for people with high blood pressure.



WHAT IS EMPOWERED TO SERVE?

EmPOWERED to Serve is a movement inspiring those who are passionate about driving change through health justice in their communities.

We are catalysts for change,
empowering the equity equation.

AHA's Mission Statement:
To be a relentless force for a
world of longer, healthier lives.



Read the introduction to ETS.

Share why you joined the ETS movement.

Encourage anyone who has not joined ETS to go online after the program and sign up for this national movement.

Note that ETS is a platform of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association and works in partnership with community organizations across the country.

Highlight the American Heart Association's Mission Statement.



IF YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure. Many don't even know they have it.

The best way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked.



Ask the group:

- Do you know someone with high blood pressure?
- Why are we concerned about blood pressure?

Review the information on the slide.

Before the next slide, ask the group:

- Do you think that high blood pressure is a health issue for multicultural communities?



URGENT COMMUNITY NEED



Over 1 in 2
African-Americans



Over 1 in 3
Asians,
Pacific Islanders



Over 1 in 3
Hispanics, Latinos



Over 1 in 4*
American Indians,
Alaska Natives

Nearly half of people with high blood pressure do not have it under control.

5 *Data for this population is from 2017 and may not reflect current prevalence.



Review the information on the slide.

Emphasize the point that heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and obesity are serious diseases that can seriously impact our lives. And that these diseases affect people in multicultural communities at higher rates.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

After today, you'll be able to share with family and friends:

- Information about blood pressure and the normal range for blood pressure numbers
- How high blood pressure can impact your health
- Things you can do to help control blood pressure



Share that today's program is about blood pressure and how to control high blood pressure.

The EmPOWERED to Serve movement embraces Life's Simple 7®, which are seven simple steps that we can take for ideal heart health. One of those steps is to control blood pressure.

Back to our lesson—we are going to learn about:

- Blood pressure and the normal range for blood pressure numbers.
- How high blood pressure can impact your health.
- Things you can do to help control blood pressure.



WHAT IS BLOOD PRESSURE?

When your heart beats, it pumps blood into your blood vessels.

This creates pressure against the blood vessel walls. This blood pressure causes your blood to flow to all parts of your body.

High Blood Pressure (HBP) is when your blood pressure is consistently too high.



First, let's define high blood pressure.

Review the information on the slide.



WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Your BP is recorded as two numbers:

Top Number = Systolic Pressure

- Indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when the heart beats.
- In this example, systolic pressure is **110 millimeters** of mercury (mm Hg).

Bottom Number = Diastolic Pressure

- Indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls while the heart is resting between beats.
- In this example, diastolic pressure is **67 millimeters** of mercury (mm Hg).



Review the information on the slide.

Point out the top number and the bottom number as you read those bullets.

FYI: In case you get asked the difference between arteries and veins:

- Arteries are blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich, bright red blood away from the heart to nourish all parts of the body.
- Veins are blood vessels that carry oxygen-depleted, bluish blood toward the heart.



HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE RANGES

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



These are the five blood pressure ranges as recognized by the American Heart Association.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mm Hg.

Ask for volunteers to take turns reading each category out loud.



POINT 1: PREVENTING AND MANAGING HBP

If your blood pressure is normal (less than 120 systolic and less than 80 diastolic), it should be screened during regular health care visits at least once per year for anyone 20 years of age or older.



It's important to know about blood pressure and how to keep it in the healthy range.

Review the information on the slide.



POINT 1: PREVENTING AND MANAGING HBP

If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure (higher than 130 systolic or higher than 80 diastolic), your health care provider may recommend:

- Monitoring your blood pressure numbers at home in addition to your regular health care visits.
- Following a treatment plan that includes lifestyle changes and, if needed, prescription medication.



Review the information on the slide.



POINT 2: HAVING HBP CAN HURT YOUR BODY

- Most of the time there are no obvious symptoms.
- Certain physical traits and lifestyle choices can put you at a greater risk for high blood pressure.
- When left untreated, the damage that high blood pressure does to your circulatory system is a significant contributing factor to heart attack, stroke and other health threats.



High blood pressure puts you at greater risk for developing life-changing and potentially life-threatening conditions.

Review the information on the slide.

Reinforce the learning by asking what are the two numbers you need to know when you measure your blood pressure:

- The top number? (systolic, the pressure in the arteries when the heart pumps)
- The bottom number? (diastolic, the pressure in the arteries when the heart relaxes between beats)

CONSEQUENCES OF HBP

Did you know?

When your blood pressure is too high for too long, it damages your blood vessels – and can lead to atherosclerosis, which are fatty deposits that build up and can clog your arteries.

This increases the workload of your circulatory system while decreasing its efficiency.

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In most cases, the damage done by high blood pressure (HBP, or hypertension) takes place over time.

Reference the handout “Consequences of High Blood Pressure” infographic. If time allows, ask for volunteers to take turns reading sections of the infographic.

Summarize by saying - “High blood pressure can have deadly health consequences, if not treated. High blood pressure can often lead to heart attack and heart failure, stroke, kidney failure and other health problems.”



ABOVE 130/80 IS HIGH RISK

Hypertension Stage 1 (130-139 systolic and 80-89 mm Hg diastolic)

At this stage, your health care provider is likely to prescribe lifestyle changes and may consider adding BP medication based on your risk of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), such as heart attack or stroke.

Hypertension Stage 2 (140/90 mm Hg or higher)

At this stage, your health care provider is likely to prescribe a combination of blood pressure medications and lifestyle changes.



**Follow the treatment plan
that your health care provider
recommends for you.**



Review the information on the slide.

Emphasize the point that multicultural communities are at higher risk for high blood pressure. This means more of us have high blood pressures of 130/80 or above. And this puts us at higher risk for heart attacks, strokes and heart failure.

Ask the group:

- Can you have high blood pressure and not know it? (Yes)
- What are some of the risks of uncontrolled high blood pressure we discussed earlier? (heart attack and heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, eye damage, other health problems, death)



RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING HBP

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

- Family history
- Increased Age
- Male Gender
- Race
- Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)



Understanding these risk factors

can help you be more aware of how likely you are to develop high blood pressure.



A number of factors and variables can put you at a greater risk of developing high blood pressure. Some of these things are out of your control, and are known as non-modifiable risk factors:

- **Family history:** If your parents or other close blood relatives have high blood pressure, there's an increased chance that you'll get it, too.
- **Age:** The older you are, the more likely you are to get high blood pressure.
- **Gender:** Until age 64, men are more likely to get high blood pressure than women are. At 65 and older, women are more likely to get high blood pressure.
- **Race:** As we discussed earlier, African Americans tend to develop high blood pressure more often than people of any other racial background in the United States. It also tends to be more severe and some medications are less effective in treating HBP in African Americans.
- **Chronic kidney disease:** HBP may occur as a result of kidney disease. And, having HBP may also cause further kidney damage.



RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING HBP

Modifiable Risk Factors

- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet, especially one high in sodium and cholesterol
- Being overweight or obese
- Drinking too much alcohol
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking and tobacco use
- Stress

You can change these risk factors
to help prevent and manage high blood pressure.



However, there are risk factors that *are* in your control. These are known as **modifiable risk factors** because people have the power to make these changes.

Review the information on the slide.



POINT 3: BE EMPOWERED WITH BP CONTROL

You can manage your blood pressure and keep it in check by:

- Not smoking, vaping or using tobacco products
- Eating a heart-healthy diet
- Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight
- Getting regular physical activity
- Limiting your sodium (salt) intake
- Limiting your alcohol intake
- Taking your medications properly

Even small changes will make a big difference.



Comment that there are things we can do to help keep our blood pressure in check.

Review information on the slide.

Say - Take these small steps to big changes. Start with one or two.



TAKE MEDICINE, IF PRESCRIBED

Partnering with your health care provider is the best way to reach your treatment goals and enjoy the benefits of better health.

- You may need to take medication every day for the rest of your life.
- You may need more than one type of prescription medication.
- Be aware of how certain over-the-counter (OTC) medications, like decongestants, may affect your BP.



Review the information on the slide.

Doctors typically prescribe medicines if BP is at or above 130/80.

It is important to note: Naturopathic approaches are not considered a substitute for medications that have been carefully studied and monitored for prescription use. Natural treatments may also not work as advertised and/or interfere with other medications.

Reference the handout “BP Raisers”, for more information on what OTC medications may affect blood pressure.



MONITOR YOUR BP AT HOME

If you have HBP, home monitoring can help your health care provider determine whether treatments are working.

Monitoring your BP at home is as easy as buying a BP cuff, using it correctly and tracking the numbers.

BP monitors can be purchased in most pharmacies and online. An automatic, cuff-style, bicep (upper arm) monitor is recommended.



Use the AHA's Check. Change. Control. Tracker™, a free online tool: heart.org/cc

Review the information on the slide.

Reference the handout “Blood Pressure Measurement Instructions” and “Blood Pressure Log”.

Say – In order to get correct blood pressure readings, it is important to follow these instructions. We have also provided a printed chart for you to log your blood pressure readings or you can use American Heart Association’s online Check. Change. Control. Tracker™ at heart.org/cc.



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

By working with your health care provider and making lifestyle changes, you can control your blood pressure.

To learn more about high blood pressure and what you can do about it, visit: heart.org/hbp



Review the information on the slide.



CALL TO ACTION – CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Keep your blood pressure in check:

- Lower sodium intake – reduce your intake of salty foods
- Get active – increase physical activity
- Drink alcohol in moderation, if you drink
- Reduce weight
- Eat better



Ask five friends to join you in taking one step to better blood pressure control.

Review the lifestyle changes on the slide.

Engage the group about lifestyle changes—ask:

- What would you find most difficult to do to control your blood pressure?
- How will you EmPOWER yourself to commit to blood pressure control?



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

We all have the power to make a difference by speaking out for policies that help build healthier communities and healthier lives.

Join **You're the Cure** today and be among the first to know when major policy initiatives pass or when your help is needed to advocate for a healthy future.

Text EMPOWER to 46839 join today!



Say:

Thank you for joining today. Before we close this lesson, we would like to mention other ways you can continue your health journey and help others in your community.

Each of us have the power to make a difference in our community. By joining the American Heart Association's **You're the Cure** program, you can be among the first to know when major policy initiatives pass or when your help is needed to advocate for an issue. Text EMPOWER to 46839 to join today!



USE YOUR VOICE TO CREATE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

You can help us work to draw communities together on the path to building a sustainable culture of health.

Go to [EmPOWEREDtoServe.org](https://www.EmPOWEREDtoServe.org)

Sign up to become an ambassador and learn how you can be a part of the movement!



Join us as we impact the health of ALL in our communities!



Encourage everyone to be active in the EmPOWERED to Serve movement.

Share how being part of the ETS movement helps you embrace a lifestyle of health.

Encourage everyone to come to a future ETS health lesson.



WRAP-UP

We appreciate your thoughts!

Tell us what you liked best.

Email us at:
empoweredtoserve@heart.org



Thank everyone for coming.

Thank all the volunteers who helped coordinate the program.

Take a moment to share an inspirational reading or ask the group to join you in an uplifting song.



WE ARE EMPOWERED TO SERVE

...serve our health, serve our community



The American Heart Association requests that this document be cited as follows:

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Put this slide up as your closing slide and leave it up until all the participants leave the room.