

# **BLOOD PRESSURE TOOLBOX TALKS**



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™

**Topic:** Heart Month**Title:** How to Help Prevent Heart Disease at Any Age

Preventing heart disease (and all cardiovascular diseases) means making smart choices now that will pay off the rest of your life. Lack of exercise, a poor diet and other unhealthy habits can take their toll over the years. Anyone at any age can benefit from simple steps to keep their heart healthy during each decade of life.

**Choose a healthy eating plan.**

Choose foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Healthy alternatives include fruits, dried beans, brown rice, starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes. As part of a healthy diet, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, fiber-rich whole grains, fish (preferably oily fish like salmon or tuna at least twice per week), nuts, and seeds and try eating some meals without meat. Select lower fat dairy products and poultry (skinless). Limit sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda and energy drinks and limit red meat. If you choose to eat meat, select the leanest cuts available such as skinless chicken and turkey and red meat such as pork chops with the fat trimmed off.

**Be physically active.**

You can slowly work up to at least 2½ hours (150 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity like brisk walking every week or 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity like jogging and running or a combination of both every week. Additionally, on 2 or more days a week you need muscle-strengthening activities that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest shoulders, and arms).

Check your blood pressure regularly and often. Use the mobile blood pressure units at the yard or at the CVC office. Easily and quickly check your blood pressure when you pick up and drop off your vehicle and equipment. Or visit the mobile blood pressure unit at the next pop-event with the American Heart Association.

**Topic:** Warning Signs**Title:** May is Stroke Awareness Month

May is Stroke Awareness Month which brings the opportunity to discuss and educate on an issue that is more common than we want it to be – stroke.

High blood pressure and high cholesterol levels can increase your risk of having a stroke. Use the mobile blood pressure units at the yard or at the CVC office to regularly check your blood pressure. Easily and quickly check your blood pressure when you pick up and drop off your vehicle and equipment.

Learn the “F.A.S.T” warning signs of a stroke and share them with your friends and family.

F.A.S.T. stands for:

- F - Face Drooping: Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.
- A - Arm Weakness: Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- S - Speech Difficulty: Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence like, “The sky is blue.” Is the sentence repeated correctly?
- T - Time to call 9-1-1: If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get them to the hospital immediately.

Know your other health numbers like blood glucose numbers and blood cholesterol level to monitor your risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes that can lead to stroke and heart attack.

**Topic:** Manage Blood Pressure/Warning Signs

**Title:** How Can I Reduce High Blood Pressure?

By treating high blood pressure, you can help reduce your risk for a stroke, heart attack, heart failure or kidney failure. Here are steps you can take now:

- Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a heart-healthy diet that is rich in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and includes low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish, legumes (beans and peas), non-tropical vegetable oils and nuts; and limits intake of sodium like canned meat or frozen meals, sweets, sugar sweetened beverages like soda and energy drinks and red meats like hamburgers.
- Choose foods rich in potassium like bananas.
- Be more physically active.
- Don't smoke and avoid second-hand smoke.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks a day for men.
- Take medicine the way your doctor tells you.
- Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level.

Check your blood pressure regularly. It's easy! Just log onto the mobile blood pressure unit that's available at the yard when you pick up or drop off your vehicles and equipment, at the CVC office or at one of the upcoming mobile blood pressure unit pop-up events with the American Heart Association.

Visit your primary care physician to talk about your health plan, how to maintain a healthy blood pressure, and get your questions answered. Take advantage of wellness visits including your annual routine check-up visits.

**Topic:** Manage Blood Pressure**Title:** The DASH eating plan

Hypertension is high blood pressure. High blood pressure/hypertension is a blood pressure reading of more than 120/80 mmHG. You can have high blood pressure/hypertension if any one of the numbers is higher than it should be. High blood pressure can increase your risk of a heart attack, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is designed to help you manage blood pressure

Emphasizing healthy food sources, it also limits:

- Red meat
- Sodium (salt) which can be hidden in processed like frozen meals, deli or canned meat, chips, and other packaged products
- Sweets, added sugars, and sugar-containing beverages like soda and energy drinks

In addition to being easy to follow, delicious and varied, the DASH eating plan is proven effective.

Visit your primary care physician to talk about your health plan including a dietary plan and how to maintain a healthy blood pressure. Take advantage of wellness visits including your annual routine check-up visits.