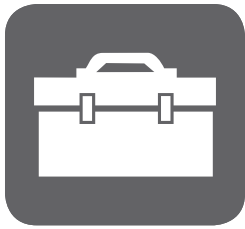


TOOLBOX TALKS



Quarter:

**BLOOD
PRESSURE**

Talk Number:

1

**Blood
Pressure
vs.
Heart Rate**

Toolbox Talk #1

Blood Pressure vs. Heart Rate

While your blood pressure is the force of your blood moving through your blood vessels, your heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute. They are two separate measurements and indicators of health.

- For people with high blood pressure (HBP or hypertension), there's no substitute for measuring blood pressure.
- Heart rate and blood pressure do not necessarily increase at the same rate.

A rising heart rate does not cause your blood pressure to increase at the same rate. Even though your heart is beating more times a minute, healthy blood vessels dilate (get larger) to allow more blood to flow through more easily.

When you exercise, your heart speeds up so more blood can reach your muscles. It may be possible for your heart rate to double safely, while your blood pressure may respond by only increasing a modest amount.

Heart Rate and Exercise

In discussions about high blood pressure, you will often see heart rate mentioned in relation to exercise. Your target heart rate is based on age and can help you monitor the intensity of your exercise.

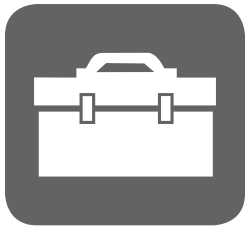
- If you measure your heart rate (take your pulse) before, during and after physical activity, you'll notice it will increase over the course of the exercise.
- The greater the intensity of the exercise, the more your heart rate will increase.
- When you stop exercising, your heart rate does not immediately return to your normal (resting) heart rate.
- The more fit you are, the sooner your heart rate will return to normal.



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™

TOOLBOX TALKS



Quarter:

**BLOOD
PRESSURE**

Talk Number:

2

**How to
Take Your
Own Blood
Pressure**

Toolbox Talk #2

How to Take Your Own Blood Pressure

AHA Recommendation: The American Heart Association recommends home monitoring for all people with high blood pressure to help the healthcare provider determine whether treatments are working. Home monitoring (self-measured blood pressure) is not a substitute for regular visits to your physician. If you have been prescribed medication to lower your blood pressure, don't stop taking your medication without consulting your doctor, even if your blood pressure readings are in the normal range during home monitoring.

Using a home blood pressure monitor

- Don't take the measurement over clothes.
- Be still. Don't smoke, drink caffeinated beverages or exercise within 30 minutes before measuring your blood pressure. Empty your bladder and ensure at least 5 minutes of quiet rest before measurements.
- Sit correctly. Sit with your back straight and supported (on a dining chair, rather than a sofa). Your feet should be flat on the floor and your legs should not be crossed. Your arm should be supported on a flat surface (such as a table) with the upper arm at heart level. Make sure the bottom of the cuff is placed directly above the bend of the elbow. Check your monitor's instructions for an illustration or have your healthcare provider show you how.
- Measure at the same time every day. It's important to take the readings at the same time each day, such as morning and evening. It is best to take the readings daily, however ideally beginning 2 weeks after a change in treatment and during the week before your next appointment.
- Take multiple readings and record the results. Each time you measure, take two or three readings one minute apart and record the results in a notebook or using an online tracker. If your monitor has built-in memory to store your readings, take it with you to your appointments. Some monitors may also allow you to upload your readings to a secure website after you register your profile.

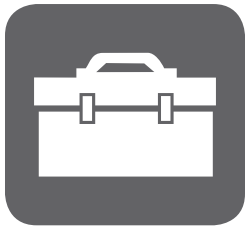
continues



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™

TOOLBOX TALKS



Quarter:

**BLOOD
PRESSURE**

Talk Number:

2

**How to
Take Your
Own Blood
Pressure**

If you get a high blood pressure reading

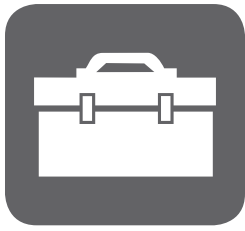
- A single high reading is not an immediate cause for alarm. If you get a reading that is slightly or moderately higher than normal, take your blood pressure a few more times and consult your healthcare professional to verify if there's a health concern or whether there may be any issues with your monitor.
- If your blood pressure readings suddenly exceed 180/120 mm Hg, wait five minutes and test again. If your readings are still unusually high, contact your doctor immediately. You could be experiencing a hypertensive crisis.
- If your blood pressure is higher than 180/120 mm Hg and you are experiencing signs of possible organ damage such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision, difficulty speaking, do not wait to see if your pressure comes down on its own. Call 9-1-1.



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™

TOOLBOX TALKS



Quarter:

**BLOOD
PRESSURE**

Talk Number:

3

**Choosing a
Home Blood
Pressure
Monitor**

Toolbox Talk #3 Choosing a Home Blood Pressure Monitor

The American Heart Association recommends an automatic, cuff-style, bicep (upper-arm) monitor.

- Wrist and finger monitors are not recommended because they yield less reliable readings.
- Choose a monitor that has been validated. If you are unsure, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.
- When selecting a blood pressure monitor for a senior, pregnant woman or child, make sure it is validated for these conditions.
- Make sure the cuff fits – measure around your upper arm and choose a monitor that comes with the correct size cuff.

Bring your monitor to your next doctor's appointment

Have your physician check to see that you are using it correctly and getting the same results as the equipment in the office. Plan to bring your monitor in once a year to ensure the readings are accurate.

Home blood pressure monitoring may be especially useful for:

- Evaluating potentially false readings, like:
 - › People who only have high readings at the doctor's office ("white coat" hypertension).
 - › People who only have high readings at home but not at the doctor's office ("masked" hypertension).
- Anyone diagnosed with high blood pressure (HBP or hypertension).
- Individuals starting high blood pressure treatment to determine its effectiveness.
- People requiring closer monitoring, especially individuals with risk factors for high blood pressure and/or conditions related to high blood pressure.
- Pregnant women, experiencing pregnancy-induced hypertension and/or preeclampsia.

Left-arm vs. right-arm blood pressure

Several studies have been done to determine what is a normal variation between right and left arm. In general, any difference of 10 mm Hg or less is considered normal and is not a cause for concern.

Why keep a blood pressure journal?

One blood pressure measurement is like a snapshot. It only tells what your blood pressure is at that moment. A record of readings taken over time provides a "time-lapse" picture of your blood pressure that can help you partner with your physician to ensure that your treatments to lower high blood pressure (HBP or hypertension) are working.



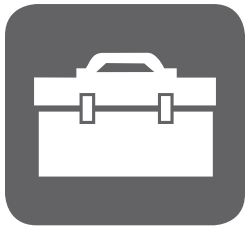
American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



PAGE 4

TOOLBOX TALKS



Quarter:

**BLOOD
PRESSURE**

Talk Number:

4

**Fight the
“Silent
Killer”**

Toolbox Talk #4 Fight the “Silent Killer”

High blood pressure (HBP, or hypertension) is a symptomless “silent killer” that quietly damages blood vessels and leads to serious health problems.

While there is no cure, using medications as prescribed and making lifestyle changes can enhance your quality of life and reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and more.

Make changes that matter:

- Eat a well-balanced diet that’s low in salt
- Limit alcohol
- Enjoy regular physical activity
- Manage stress
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking
- Take your medications properly
- Work together with your doctor

Managing blood pressure is a lifelong commitment

If you have high blood pressure, it’s vital that you listen to your doctor. Remember: You’re a part of your healthcare team. You and your doctor are partners.

Educate yourself about HBP and learn how to monitor your blood pressure at home. Armed with this information, you can commit to living heart healthy.

By adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle, you can:

- Prevent or delay the development of high blood pressure.
- Enhance the effectiveness of blood pressure medications.
- Reduce high blood pressure.
- Lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney damage, vision loss and sexual dysfunction.

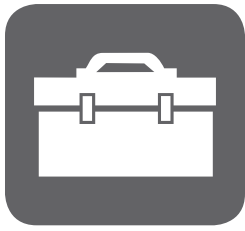
You CAN fight high blood pressure

While heart disease is still the No. 1 killer in the United States and around the world, death rates have decreased significantly. Earlier and better treatment of high blood pressure has played a key role in that decrease.



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Quarter:

**BLOOD
PRESSURE**

Talk Number:

5

**Partner with
Your Doctor
to Manage
Your
High Blood
Pressure**

Toolbox Talk #5

Partner with Your Doctor to Manage Your High Blood Pressure

Working together to fine-tune your blood pressure treatment

According to AHA recommendations, people being treated but still not reaching their target blood pressure – should be a healthcare priority.

A key to better control is a good doctor-patient partnership.

Collaboration is key

If you're one of the millions of Americans battling high blood pressure (HBP or hypertension), here are some solutions to help you collaborate with your healthcare provider and get your blood pressure under control:

- **Ask about your blood pressure at your annual checkup.** If it's high, check your blood pressure regularly between appointments – at home or at a pharmacy with a blood pressure monitor. Follow up with your doctor based on his/her recommendations.
- **Know your numbers.** Learn what your blood pressure numbers mean to you and your health.
- **Become a tracker.** Keep a log of your medication, blood pressure levels and questions to ask your doctor as they come to mind.
- **Be flexible.** It may take a while to get to your blood pressure goal. It may also take more than one medication in addition to lifestyle changes to get you there. Keep in close touch with your healthcare provider along the way to create the best plan for yourself.
- **Know yourself.** What keeps you from keeping up with your medicines? Eating healthy? Losing weight? Be aware of your barriers to better health and talk with your doctor about them. Your provider or clinic may have suggestions or know programs that can help.

Once your treatment program becomes routine, maintaining a lower blood pressure is easier. Remind yourself that by managing your blood pressure, you are lowering your risk for heart attack, stroke and other serious conditions.

