



BLOOD PRESSURE PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Congratulations! You've just taken the first step toward improving your blood pressure numbers — including core areas such as blood pressure self-monitoring, moving more, eating healthy and taking care of your mental well-being. Think of Check. Change. Control. (CCC) Blood Pressure as an 'experience,' rather than a program. Your organization's CCC Lead will be here to guide you but we've got some resources for you throughout the experience. Remember to refer back to your participant CCC website to take your welcome and final experience surveys. You'll also have the opportunity to enhance your experience through a personalized 28-day journey on the website.

Why Should I CCC?

It's important to know about blood pressure and how to keep it in the healthy range. High blood pressure (HBP, or hypertension) is a symptomless "silent killer" that quietly damages blood vessels and leads to serious health problems.

You'll embark on a 4-month experience to learn, practice and maintain healthy habits to control your blood pressure including eating smart, moving more and focusing on mental well-being. Below you'll find specific resources to help reinforce your knowledge.

MONTH 1: CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Keeping blood pressure numbers in a normal range is important for your health — and for the health of those you care about. Everyone should know their blood pressure numbers and self-measure regularly.

MONTH 2: EAT SMART

Eating fruits and vegetables every day as part of an overall healthy dietary pattern may reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke.

MONTH 3: MOVE MORE

Establish and maintain a physical activity plan- anything counts. Try moving more and sitting less.

MONTH 4: FOCUS ON MENTAL WELL-BEING

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.



Consequences of High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (HBP) is often the first domino in a chain or “domino effect” leading to devastating consequences, like:



STROKE

HBP can cause blood vessels in the brain to burst or clog more easily.



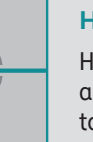
VISION LOSS

HBP can damage the vessels in the eyes.



HEART FAILURE

HBP can cause the heart to enlarge and fail to supply blood to the body.



HEART ATTACK

HBP damages arteries and causes them to narrow and stiffen.



SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION

This can be erectile dysfunction in men or lower libido in women.



KIDNEY DISEASE/ FAILURE

HBP can damage the arteries in the kidneys and interfere with their ability to effectively filter blood.

A simple **blood pressure check** is the first step to preventing the “domino effect.”

Learn more at heart.org/hbp.

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CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE: Consequences of High Blood Pressure (heart.org)



BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT INSTRUCTIONS

 DON'T SMOKE, EXERCISE, DRINK
CAFFEINATED BEVERAGES OR
ALCOHOL WITHIN 30 MINUTES
OF MEASUREMENT.

 REST IN A CHAIR FOR AT
LEAST 5 MINUTES WITH YOUR
LEFT ARM RESTING
COMFORTABLY ON A FLAT
SURFACE AT HEART LEVEL.
SIT CALMLY AND DON'T TALK.

 MAKE SURE YOU'RE
RELAXED. SIT STILL IN A
CHAIR WITH YOUR FEET
FLAT ON THE FLOOR WITH
YOUR BACK STRAIGHT
AND SUPPORTED.

 TAKE AT LEAST TWO READINGS
1 MIN. APART IN MORNING
BEFORE TAKING MEDICATIONS,
AND IN EVENING BEFORE
DINNER. RECORD ALL RESULTS.

 USE PROPERLY CALIBRATED AND
VALIDATED INSTRUMENT. CHECK
THE CUFF SIZE AND FIT.

 PLACE THE BOTTOM OF
THE CUFF ABOVE THE
BEND OF THE ELBOW.

American Heart Association recommended blood pressure levels

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



* Wait a few minutes and take blood pressure again.
If it's still high, contact your doctor immediately.

LEARN MORE AT
[HEART.ORG/HBP](https://heart.org/hbp)

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CONTROL YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE: Blood Pressure Measurement Instructions



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When you hear “salad,” you may think of a boring bowl of lettuce and tomatoes. But salad can be so much more! With a few simple additions, it can be a delicious, healthy and inexpensive meal.

GRAINS

Adding cooked whole grains to your salad is a satisfying way to feel full longer! Try whole wheat couscous or pasta, barley, quinoa, or wild rice!

BUILD A HEALTHIER SALAD

PROTEINS

Adding protein to your salad will keep you feeling fuller longer. Try grilled chicken, salmon, tuna, a hard-boiled egg, or a small amount of cheese! Beans and unsalted nuts are other great options!

GREENS

Choose dark, leafy greens like romaine, spinach, or arugula. You can also add fresh herbs like basil, thyme, oregano, or mint for zesty flavor and extra nutrients!

Add sliced fresh or dried fruit — choose a rainbow of colors. Pears, apples, and berries are all super salad ingredients!

FRUITS

VEGGIES

Vegetables can add crunch and flavor to any salad! Try raw carrots, cucumbers, or broccoli. Roasted beets, potatoes, and squash add a little bit of sweetness.

QUICK TIPS

Choose lower-fat, lower-sodium cheeses such as mozzarella or Swiss. Add canned and frozen produce with little salt and added sugar. When adding ingredients, choose options low in sugar, fat, and sodium. Frozen and canned ingredients work great. Be sure to drain, rinse and pat dry to help your greens stay crisp!

DRESSINGS

Make your own healthy dressing with oil, vinegar, and spices from your pantry! Jazz it up with fresh herbs, citrus juice, onions, garlic, or scallions. Taste-test as you add small amounts of ingredients until you find what you love!

heart.org/HealthyForGood

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EAT SMART: Build a Healthier Salad | American Heart Association



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SEASONS OF EATING

SPRING

Artichokes
Asparagus
Carrots
Chives
Fava Beans

Green Onions
Leeks
Lettuce
Parsnips
Peas

Radishes
Rhubarb
Swiss Chard

SUMMER

Berries
Corn
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Figs
Garlic
Grapes

Green Beans
Melons
Peppers
(sweet and hot)
Stone Fruit
(apricots, cherries,
nectarines, peaches,
plums)

Summer Squash
Tomatoes
Zucchini

FALL

Apples
Brussels Sprouts
Dates

Hard Squash
(acorn, butternut,
spaghetti)

Pears
Pumpkins
Sweet Potatoes

WINTER

Bok Choy
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Celery

Citrus Fruit
(clementines,
grapefruit, lemons,
limes, oranges,
tangerines)
Endive

Leafy Greens
(collards, kale,
mustard greens,
spinach)
Root Vegetables
(beets, turnips)

KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND WHEN USING AND SHOPPING FOR SEASONAL PRODUCE:

- Fresh foods are often less expensive during their harvest season. You may even save money by buying in bulk.
- Shop at your local farmers market to learn more about produce and get ideas on how to prepare foods in season.
- Gardening gives you fresh seasonal produce and a little exercise, too. The sense of pride you'll feel will make that produce taste even better!
- Frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables also can be healthy choices. Compare food labels and choose items with the lowest amounts of sodium, added sugars and saturated fat.
- Freeze fresh produce so you can add it to smoothies, soups, breads and more throughout the year.

Learn more at heart.org/HealthyForGood

EAT SMART **MOVE MORE** **BE WELL**

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EAT SMART: Seasons of Eating | American Heart Association



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CHOOSE YOUR OWN WORKOUT

Circuits can be a great way to work out and reduce stress without any special equipment

TO BUILD YOUR CIRCUIT, CHOOSE 3-4 EXERCISES FROM EACH CATEGORY:

Alternate cardio and strength exercises in short bursts of 30 seconds and 3 minutes, then repeat the circuit two to three times.



CARDIO EXERCISES

- Jumping Jacks
- Squat Jumps
- Jogging or Marching in Place
- Stair-Climbing or Step-Ups
- High Knees
- Mountain Climbers
- Star Jumps
- Burpees



STRENGTHENING AND STABILITY EXERCISES

- Plank and Side Plank
- Pushups
- Sit-Ups or Crunches
- Hip Lift or Bridge Position
- Tricep Dips on a Chair
- Lunges
- Squats or Chair Position
- Wall Sits

Learn more ways to add activity to your routine at
heart.org/HealthyForGood

EAT SMART **MOVE MORE** **BE WELL**

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MOVE MORE: [Create a Circuit Home Workout Infographic](#) | American Heart Association



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**MOVE MORE
FOR WHOLE BODY
HEALTH**

**MOVE MORE,
WITH MORE
INTENSITY,
AND SIT LESS.**

AIM FOR
150+ MINUTES
EACH WEEK
**OF MODERATE-INTENSITY
AEROBIC ACTIVITY**

**LEARN MORE AT
[HEART.ORG/MOVEMORE](https://heart.org/movemore)**

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MOVE MORE: Move more for Whole Body Health Infographic | American Heart Association



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How Sleep

Affects Your Health



1 in 3 adults don't get enough sleep.

How much **sleep** do you need?



Most adults need **7 to 9** hours of sleep each night. Kids and teens need even more. Yet the average high school student gets only 6.5 hours per school night, and about 20% get 5 hours or less!

Benefits of good **sleep**



- Healing and repair of cells, tissues and blood vessels

- Stronger immune system



- More creativity and productivity

- Improved mood and energy



- Better brain function including alertness, decision-making, focus, learning, memory, reasoning and problem-solving

- Healthy growth and development for kids and teens



- Better ability to build muscle

- Quicker reflexes



- Less risk of chronic disease

Your **Health**

Poor **sleep** may put you at higher risk for:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Cardiovascular disease
- Cognitive decline and dementia
- Depression
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High blood sugar
- High cholesterol
- Infections
- Obesity

Poor **sleep** can cause:

- Accidents
- Breathing problems
- Hormone imbalance
- Memory and cognitive issues
- Increased appetite and unhealthy eating
- Inflammation
- Stress
- Weight gain

Remember: **7 to 9** will help you feel fine, so get your **ZZZs!**

Learn more at heart.org/HealthyForGood

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FOCUS ON MENTAL WELL-BEING:

How Sleep Affects Your Health Infographic | American Heart Association



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STRESS & STRAIN: BODY & BRAIN

Worries about work, money, health care and staying safe in the COVID-pandemic — as well as broader issues like discrimination and climate change — can pile on the stress.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, try these ways to notch down your stress yourself. Also ask for help or a referral from your health care team on ways to lower your stress.



WHY IT MATTERS

Simply put, stress can kill. People with high levels of chronic stress or psychological distress are more likely to die of various causes, research shows, including of heart disease and stroke.

Chronic stress is also linked to anxiety disorders and major depression. And stress can underlie other problems, such as irritability, sleep disruption, headaches, changes in appetite, gut discomfort and reduced fertility.

TRY THESE STRESS-BUSTERS

Fight stress by focusing on your physical and mental health.



Get out of the house:
Take a walk in nature and enjoy the sights and sounds.



Sleep tight: Set a regular bedtime and wakeup routine and turn off or dim electronic screens as bedtime approaches.



Use your network:
Reach out and connect regularly with family and friends.



Put your mind to it: Explore mindfulness, a type of meditation that focuses your attention on your present experiences without interpretation or judgment.



Lean on a furry friend:
Pets may help reduce physiological reactions to stress.



Work it out: Regular physical activity — a recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, or a mix of both weekly — can relieve tension, anxiety and depression and give you an immediate exercise “high.”

For more tips on the mind-heart-body connection, visit heart.org/BeWell.

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FOCUS ON MENTAL WELL-BEING:

Stress and Strain, Body and Brain Infographic | American Heart Association