



# Directions for Presenters

**This slide is for people who want to present this health lesson to a group.  
If you are using these slides for your own health education, please disregard this slide.**

Review all the slides and presenter notes before your presentation. If you can, print out the presenter notes to have them handy in case you need them.

## **Introduction: (30 seconds)**

- Greet the audience.
- Introduce yourself and your topic.
- Let people know they can take pictures of any of the slides they find helpful.

## **At the end of your presentation:**

- Thank your audience for their time and open the discussion to questions.
- If there are questions you cannot answer, please refer them to our [heart.org](https://www.heart.org) website and social media handles for more information.

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Review the information on the slide.

Please do not change or add anything to these slides.



Introduce yourself –

Say: Today, I will be presenting a health lesson brought to you by the American Heart Association.

The topic is: Blood Pressure: What is it and how can you control it?



# WHAT WE DO

Investing in and supporting lifesaving heart and brain research for over 100 years.

## FUNDED PACEMAKERS AND ICDS RESEARCH



Contributed to developing cutting-edge devices, including leadless pacemakers and wearable defibrillators.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CPR GUIDELINES AND CONTINUED EFFORTS



Created CPR and AED guidelines and pushing for laws to require CPR training in schools and more public AEDs to help save lives.

## FUNDING HEART DISEASE RESEARCH



Investing in groundbreaking research that has led to lifesaving treatments and innovations in cardiovascular care.

## FUNDING INNOVATION IN HEART DISEASE DIAGNOSTICS



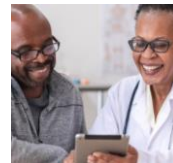
Advancing imaging techniques, such as MRI and CT scans, along with biomarkers for the early detection of heart disease.

## FUNDING ACUTE STROKE CARE



Funding research to support timely intervention strategies for patients with stroke, which has significantly improved survival rates and recovery outcomes.

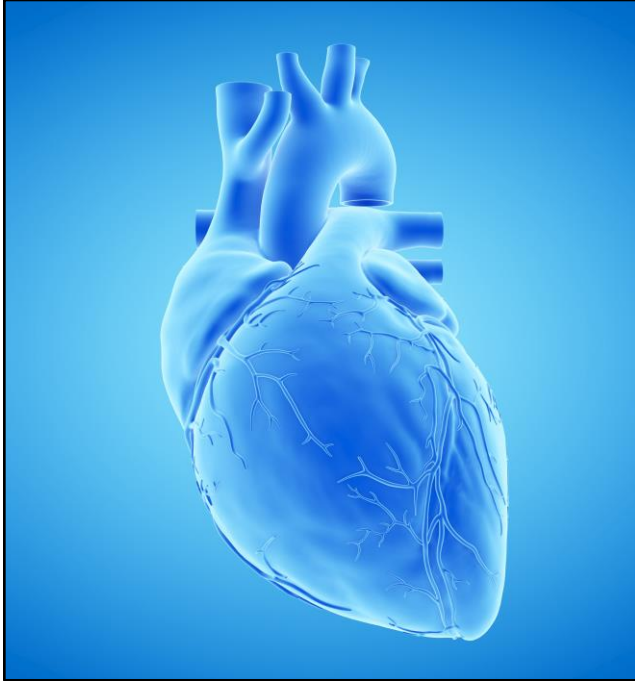
## DEVELOPMENT OF HYPERTENSION GUIDELINES AND RESEARCH



Updated blood pressure guidelines with collaborators to support early detection and care. Funded research on causes, prevention and treatment.

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The American Heart Association has been investing in and supporting lifesaving heart and brain research for over 100 years. From contributing to the development of the pacemaker, to advancing imaging techniques such as MRI and CT scans, to creating the CPR and AED guidelines, their mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.



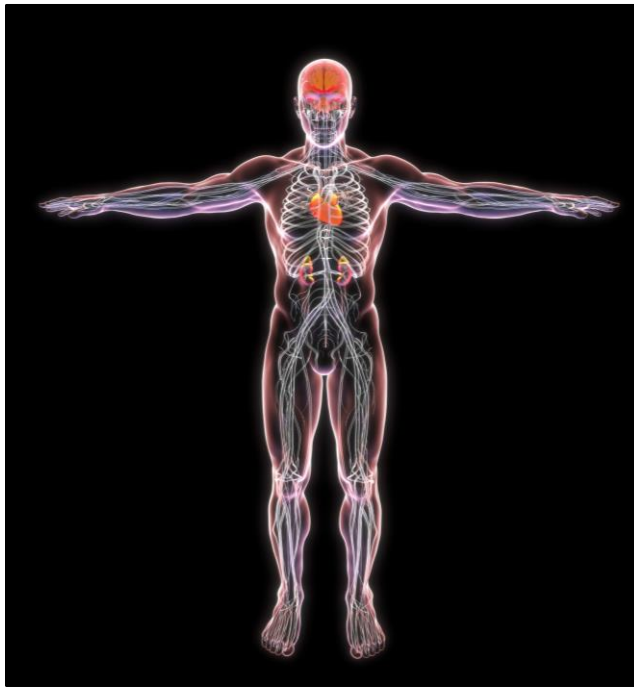
# Heart Disease

More than half of the people in the U.S. do not know that heart disease is the leading cause of death.

It kills more people than any other cause, including cancer.

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Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S.—even greater than cancer. The good news is, there’s a lot we can do to prevent or treat it. One of the most important steps is checking your blood pressure. If it’s high, learning how to manage it can make a big difference.



## Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic (CKM) Health



Your heart, kidneys, and the way the body creates and uses energy (metabolic health) have different jobs, but together they affect your overall health.

When one area of your health isn't working well, it can hurt other areas.

For example:

- High blood pressure (BP) can harm the heart, raising the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- High BP can damage the kidneys over time, potentially leading to chronic kidney disease.
- High BP often occurs with diabetes and obesity, commonly making CKM health problems worse together.

Most people don't know how closely these problems are connected. Understanding and protecting all three systems can improve overall health and lower your risk of heart disease or stroke.

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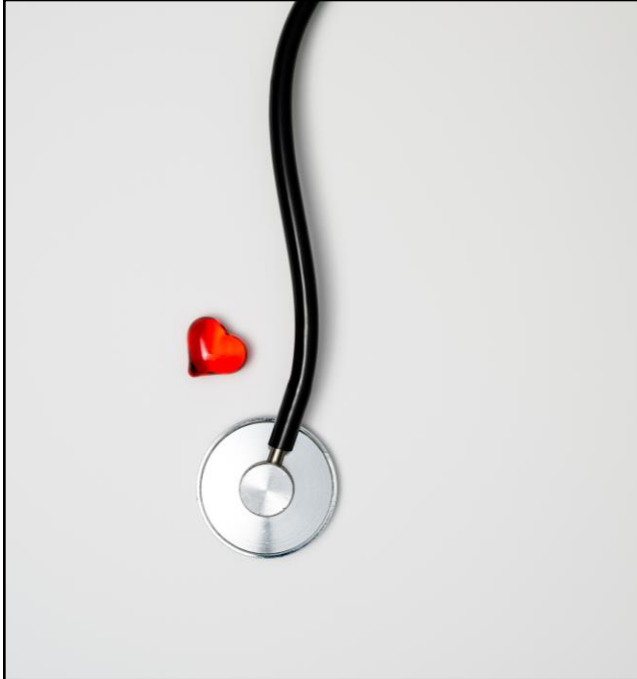
The whole body is connected and works together like a team. Your heart, kidneys, and the way the body creates and uses energy (metabolic health) have different jobs, but together they affect your overall health. A new concept for how your heart, kidneys and energy system connect and share work is called cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic health, or CKM health. CKM health is about your overall health and taking action early to prevent a heart attack, heart failure or stroke.

The American Heart Association is leading the way in helping people understand and manage their overall health by focusing on the whole person, not just one disease at a time


When one area of your health isn't working well it can hurt other areas.  
For example:

- High blood pressure (BP) can harm the heart, raising the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- High BP can damage the kidneys over time, potentially leading to chronic kidney disease.
- High BP often occurs with diabetes and obesity, commonly making CKM health problems worse together.

Most people don't know how closely these problems are connected. That's why the American Heart Association is working to teach everyone how to protect all three systems together to improve overall health and lower the risk of heart disease or stroke.



# What You Will Learn



## High Blood Pressure

- What it is
- What causes it
- How to manage it

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Today, you will learn what high blood pressure is, how it impacts your health, the causes, how to manage it, and a next-step action plan. The lesson should take about 15 - 20 minutes. Feel free to take pictures of any of the slides.

# You Are Not Alone

## High Blood Pressure



High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer” because it has no clear symptoms.

Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure.

Many don’t even know they have it.

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Ask the group: Do you know someone with high blood pressure? Why are we concerned about blood pressure?

A lot of people think that high blood pressure is a problem for older adults, but almost 1 in 4 young adults (18–39 years old) have high blood pressure. One thing to remember is that high blood pressure does not usually have symptoms. That is why it is called the silent killer. So, people might have high blood pressure and not even know it.

## High Blood Pressure Puts You at Greater Risk of:



- Heart Disease
- Heart Failure
- Atrial Fibrillation
- Stroke
- Dementia
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- Vision Loss
- Sexual Dysfunction

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High blood pressure is one of the most common health problems. There are things you can do to change it. The reason this is so important is because, when left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to heart disease, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, stroke, dementia, chronic kidney disease, vision loss and sexual dysfunction, such as erectile dysfunction in men and lower sex drive in women.

This is why it's so important to check your blood pressure often. If you have high blood pressure, learning to manage it can save your life.

Added Tip: 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)



# What Is

## Blood Pressure



**Blood pressure is the force of blood as it pumps against your vessel walls.**

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

**2** This creates pressure against the blood vessel walls, causing your blood to flow to all parts of your body.

**3** High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is when this pressure is consistently too high.

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First, let's define high 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, also known as hypertension, is when your blood pressure is consistently too high.

What's most important to understand is that high blood pressure can lead to health problems, including heart disease and stroke.

## What the Numbers Mean



### Top Number = **Systolic Blood Pressure**

Shows how much pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls **when the heart beats**.

### Bottom Number = **Diastolic Blood Pressure**

Shows how much pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls **while the heart is resting between beats**.

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Your blood pressure is recorded as two numbers:

The top number is called systolic blood pressure. It shows how much pressure your blood pushes against your artery walls when the heart beats.

- Point to the picture on the screen. In this picture, the systolic pressure is 110 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

The bottom number is called diastolic blood pressure. It shows how much pressure your blood is pushing against your artery walls while the heart is resting between beats.

- Point to the picture on the screen. In this same picture, the diastolic pressure is 67 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

Added Tip: If you are 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.

## Let's Talk About Risk Factors

Risk factors are things that can increase your chances of getting sick or having health problems.



What are some things **you CAN'T control** that would affect your blood pressure?

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Question for the group: What are some things that you can't change that would impact your blood pressure? Give people about 2 minutes to provide answers.

## Things That Put You at Risk

that CAN'T be changed or are hard to control



### Family history

If your parents have high blood pressure, you might be at higher risk.



### Race/ethnicity

High blood pressure is more common in non-Hispanic Black adults.



### Age

The older you are, the higher the risk (though young people can have high blood pressure, too).



### Sex

Men are at higher risk of developing high blood pressure until age 64. At 65 and older, women are more likely to get high blood pressure.



### Chronic kidney disease

There is a relationship between your kidneys and cardiovascular health.



### Obstructive sleep apnea

Sleep apnea episodes can lead to an increase in blood pressure.

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Family history, age, sex, race and chronic kidney disease. All these things can increase your risk of high blood pressure. Even though you can't change any of these factors, they are important to know.

One of the key points I want to highlight is family history. Not everyone is comfortable talking to their family about health issues, but it can save your life. So, the next time you talk to your family, make sure to make health a top priority.

## Let's Talk About Risk Factors



What are some things  
**you CAN control**  
that might affect your  
blood pressure?

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Question for the group: What are some things you CAN control that might affect your blood pressure? Give people about 2 minutes to provide answers.

# Things That Put You at Risk

that **CAN** be changed



## **AVOID/STOP**

- Alcohol (at the very least, limit it)
- Cigarette smoking
- Black licorice
- Some anti-inflammatory drugs (for example: NSAIDs such as ibuprofen)
- Herbal supplements such as St. John's wort
- Recreational drugs

## **LIMIT**

- Caffeine
- Acetaminophen
- Decongestants (Use for shortest duration possible and avoid in severe or uncontrolled high blood pressure)

## **MANAGE**

- Diabetes
- Being obese or overweight
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy diet
- Being physically inactive

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Here is a list of the things that are in your control. These are known as manageable risk factors because people have the power to make these changes.

## **AVOID**

- Alcohol (avoid or limit alcohol to  $\leq 1$  drink daily for women and  $\leq 2$  drinks daily for men)
- Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke
- Black licorice
- Some anti-inflammatory drugs (for example: NSAIDs such as ibuprofen)
- Herbal supplements such as St. John's wort
- Recreational drugs

## **LIMIT**

- Caffeine (avoid more than 1 cup daily in patients with severe uncontrolled high blood pressure)
- Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol- to less than 4 grams/day)
- Decongestants - Use for shortest duration possible and avoid in severe or uncontrolled high blood pressure

## **MANAGE**

- Diabetes
- Being obese or overweight
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy diet
- Being physically inactive

Think about the things you see on this list and how they relate to your life. The important thing to remember is that you can improve these things.



# Know Your **Blood Pressure** Numbers

High blood pressure is  
130/80 or higher

## Blood Pressure Categories

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130-139	or	80-89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

\*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking

[heart.org/bplevels](http://heart.org/bplevels)

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These are the updated American Heart Association blood pressure categories.

- Normal blood pressure is less than 120 for the systolic or top number and less than 80 for the diastolic or bottom number.
- Elevated blood pressure is between 120-129 for the systolic or top number and less than 80 for the diastolic or bottom number.
- Stage 1 high blood pressure or hypertension is now 130-139 systolic, or the top number, or 80-89 diastolic, or bottom number.
- Stage 2 high blood pressure is 140 or higher for the systolic or top number or 90 or higher for the diastolic or bottom number.
- Severe high blood pressure, or hypertension, is anything higher than 180 for the systolic or top number and/or higher than 120 for the diastolic or bottom number. If you don't have symptoms, you should call your health care professional.
- For anything higher than 180 for systolic and higher than 120 for diastolic that includes symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking, you need to call 911 immediately.



Please take a picture of this chart so that you have it with you at all times and can use it as a reference.

## When Should You Call Your Health Care Professional? Severe Hypertension



High Blood Pressure with No Symptoms  
= **Severe Hypertension**

Anything **higher than 180** for **systolic/top** number and **higher than 120** for **diastolic/bottom** number, you need to call your health care professional.

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Anything higher than 180 for systolic/top number and higher than 120 for diastolic/bottom number is considered severe hypertension, and you need to call your health care professional immediately.

## When Should You Call 911?

### Hypertensive Emergency



### High Blood Pressure + Symptoms = Hypertensive Emergency

Anything higher than 180 for systolic/top number and higher than 120 for diastolic/bottom number that includes symptom(s) like:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Back pain
- Numbness
- Weakness
- Change in vision
- Difficulty speaking

**You need to call 911 right away.**

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It's important to know that, if you have blood pressure that is higher than 180 for systolic and higher than 120 for diastolic that includes symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking, you need to call 911 right away.

## How to Take Your Blood Pressure at Home



### 30 minutes before:

- No smoking
- No exercise
- No caffeinated beverages
- No alcohol

### To get an accurate measurement:

- Rest for at least 5 minutes.
- Don't talk.
- Rest your arm comfortably on a flat surface at heart level.
- Sit upright, back straight and supported.
- Keep legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor.
- Use a properly validated device.
- The bottom of the cuff needs to be above the bend of the elbow.
- Wrap the cuff against your bare skin, not over clothing.

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If you have high blood pressure, home monitoring can help your health care professional determine whether treatments are working. Monitoring your blood pressure at home can be done by buying or renting a blood pressure cuff, using it correctly and tracking the numbers.

Blood pressure monitors can be purchased in most pharmacies and online. In adults, the use of cuffless blood pressure devices is not recommended for the diagnosis or management of high blood pressure.

An automatic, cuff-style, bicep (upper arm) monitor is recommended. There is a right and wrong way to measure your blood pressure at home.

First: 30 minutes before your blood pressure is taken:

- No smoking
- No exercise
- No caffeinated beverages
- No alcohol

Second: While you prepare to take your blood pressure:

- Rest for at least 5 minutes.
- Don't talk.

- Rest your arm comfortably on a flat surface at heart level.
- Sit upright, back straight and supported.
- Keep legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor.
- Use a validated device.
- The bottom of the cuff needs to be above the bend of the elbow.
- Wrap the cuff against your bare skin, not over clothing.

Reliance on cuffless devices, including smartwatches, for accurate blood pressure measurements should be avoided until these devices demonstrate greater precision and reliability.

## Partnering With Your Health Care Professional



### Stick to the plan

It's vital to stick to the medication plan your health care professional has recommended.

### Ask questions

If you have any concerns about side effects, discuss them with your doctor.

### OTC medications

Discuss over-the-counter (OTC) medications with your pharmacist or doctor. Pain relievers or decongestants may affect your blood pressure.

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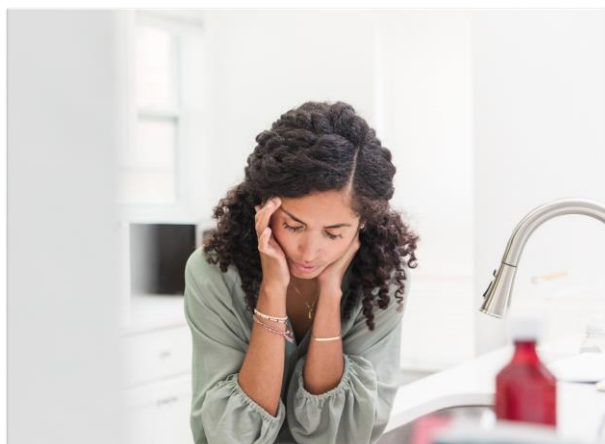
Partnering with your health care professional is the best way to reach your treatment goals and enjoy the benefits of better health. When it comes to medication, it's important to keep in mind:

- You may need to take medication every day for the rest of your life.
- Tracking your medication and taking it as prescribed.
- You may need more than one type of prescription medication.
- Be aware of how certain over-the-counter (OTC) medications, such as decongestants, may affect your blood pressure.
- Understanding possible side effects of medications and talking to your health care professional about any concerns or questions you have.

Question for the group: When was the last time you saw your health care professional? Is it time to make an appointment? Again, don't answer this question out loud, but it's important to think about these things. Sometimes people may feel they don't have time, but making your health a priority is important. Your health is connected to your loved ones and to doing things you enjoy.

# Hypotension

## When Blood Pressure Is Too Low



## Symptoms of constant low blood pressure

- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Neck or back pain
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Heart palpitations, or feelings that your heart is skipping a beat, fluttering or beating too hard or too fast

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A low blood pressure reading is usually good. Some people with very low blood pressure have a condition called hypotension. This occurs when blood pressure is less than 90/60 mm Hg. Low blood pressure is usually not harmful unless there are other symptoms that concern a health care professional.

Constantly low blood pressure can be dangerous if it causes signs and symptoms such as:

- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Neck or back pain
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Heart palpitations, or feelings that your heart is skipping a beat, fluttering or beating too hard or too fast

Low blood pressure can happen with:

- Prolonged bed rest
- Prolonged standing
- Depression
- Parkinson's disease
- Pregnancy
- Dehydration
- Certain medications and substances can cause low blood pressure
- Heart problems
- Endocrine problems
- Nutritional deficiencies

If you notice a sudden decline in blood pressure, one reading that is lower than normal, you shouldn't worry unless you have other symptoms or problems. If you are dizzy, nauseous or have other symptoms, contact your health care professional. Please keep a record of your symptoms and when they happened, or call your doctor with your concerns.

## High Blood Pressure and Sex Challenges for Men



- Erectile dysfunction is common in men with high blood pressure.
- Some high blood pressure medications can also cause erectile dysfunction.
- Adjusting medications, lifestyle changes, and/or erectile dysfunction treatments can help.
- Talk to your health care professional about options.

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High blood pressure usually doesn't have any signs you can feel. But over time, it can hurt your blood vessels and make them stiff and narrow. This makes it harder for blood to flow through the body, including to the penis. When less blood goes to the penis, it can be hard for some men to get or keep an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction, and it's pretty common. Even if it happens just once, it can make a man feel worried. He might even start to avoid sex because he's afraid it will happen again. High blood pressure can also make it harder to ejaculate. Some blood pressure medicines can also lower a man's interest in sex.

Some high blood pressure medications can also cause erectile dysfunction. If your blood pressure medicine is causing sexual side effects, talk with your healthcare professional about your options. Some high blood pressure medicines are less likely to cause sexual side effects. Lifestyle changes and/or erectile dysfunction treatments can also help. The best thing to do is talk to your health care professional about your options. But it is important to understand that high blood pressure on its own can cause erectile dysfunction; it's not just the medication.



## High Blood Pressure and Sex Challenges for Women



- High blood pressure can affect women's sexual health. It may be connected due to changes in blood vessel function and other risk factors such as age and hormonal changes. Certain medications may also contribute.
- It might also lower something called nitric oxide, which helps muscles relax.
- Talk to your health care professional if you have concerns.

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Health care professionals don't know exactly how high blood pressure affects women's sex lives, but it may reduce blood flow to the vagina. It might also lower something called nitric oxide, which helps muscles relax. This can cause some women to:

- Feel less interested in sex
- Have trouble reaching orgasm
- Have vaginal dryness

Using lubricants and finding ways to feel more excited can help.

Just like men, women may feel worried or have relationship problems because of these changes. It's important for women to talk to your health care professional if you have any concerns.

# Pregnancy

## Prevention



Women with high blood pressure who are planning a pregnancy or are pregnant should talk to their health care professional and be counseled about the benefits of aspirin to reduce the risk of preeclampsia.

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Women with high blood pressure who are planning a pregnancy or are pregnant should talk to their health care professional and be counseled about the benefits of aspirin to reduce the risk of preeclampsia.

## High Blood Pressure

### Key Thing to Remember



High blood pressure is the most common reason people get heart disease, including coronary artery disease, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, stroke, dementia, chronic kidney disease and all-cause mortality.

The good news is it can be treated and even prevented by making healthy choices such as eating well, moving your body, and taking medication if it's prescribed.

Health care professionals want most adults with high blood pressure to keep their blood pressure below **130 over 80**. *They may have different goals for people who are sick, older or pregnant.*

Check with your health care professional if you have any questions.

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High blood pressure is the most common reason people get heart disease, including coronary artery disease, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, stroke, dementia, chronic kidney disease, and all-cause mortality, or the total number of deaths from any cause in a defined group of people.

The good news is it can be treated and even prevented by making healthy choices, such as eating well, moving your body, and taking medication if it's prescribed.

Health care professionals want most adults with high blood pressure to keep their blood pressure below **130 over 80**. *They may have different goals for people who are sick, older or pregnant.*

Check with your health care professional if you have any questions.



# Let's Shake It OUT!

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Now it's time for us to move! Let's try a basic shaking exercise for beginners. You can do this activity standing or sitting:

**If you prefer standing:** Stand with your feet hip-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Begin gently bouncing up and down, letting your heels lift off the ground. As you continue, let the movement rise up through your body. Your legs may start to shake, and that's perfectly fine! Allow the movement to reach your hips, torso, arms, and head. It might feel a little silly at first, but let's do it! This is not the time to feel embarrassed — it's your chance to let go.

**If you prefer sitting:** Start by shaking your hands as if you were trying to dry them in the air. Let the movement travel through your arms and up to your shoulders. You may feel tingling or warmth in your hands — that's a good sign! It means energy is flowing and tension is being released.



Now we are at the final part of our presentation, which is all about the next steps through the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8. These are eight simple measures that will help keep your heart and brain healthy. Four are focused on behaviors, and four are focused on numbers you need to know.

## Four Numbers You Need to Know

### Blood Pressure

Less than 120/80 mmHg



### Blood Lipids

Less than 130 mg/dL of non-HDL cholesterol



### Healthy Weight

A body mass index of less than 25



### Blood Sugar

No history of diabetes and fasting blood glucose of less than 100 mg/dL (or Hemoglobin A1c < 5.7)



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Your blood pressure, cholesterol, weight and blood sugar are the four key numbers you need to know.

## Four Health Behaviors You Can Do



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The four key health behaviors are not smoking or vaping, getting adequate sleep, following a healthy diet and getting enough physical activity. These will be the first ones we focus on.

## Let's Talk Tobacco & Nicotine



Which one of these is a risk if you smoke?

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Depression and anxiety
- Premature aging
- ✓ All of the above

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The first step to quitting tobacco and or nicotine products is to understand the risks and health effects for you and your family.

- Heart disease: Nicotine and tobacco can raise blood pressure and increase heart rate. It can cause blood vessels to narrow, increasing the risk of heart attacks.
- Stroke: Nicotine and tobacco can damage blood vessels. It can increase the risk of having a stroke by causing blood clots or blocking blood flow to the brain. It can also cause memory problems and dementia later in life.
- Diabetes: Nicotine and tobacco can increase the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. For people with diabetes, it can also make it harder to manage blood sugar levels.
- Cancer: Smoking is the leading cause of cancer. Nicotine can abnormally speed up the growth of new cells. This has been shown in tumor cells in the breast, colon, and lung.
- Depression and anxiety: Nicotine and tobacco can lead to mood swings and heightened anxiety when their effects wear off.
- Premature aging: Smoking can cause premature wrinkles, skin damage, a dull complexion due to reduced blood flow and damage to the skin's elasticity.



# Quitting Tobacco or Nicotine



## Talk to your health care professional

They can be a partner in your plan and may suggest medications that can help you quit.

## Commit to a quit day

Choose a day in the next week.

## Cold turkey or gradual?

Decide if you will quit all at once or start cutting down.

## Get prepared

Keep healthy snacks on hand and plan fun ways to fill your time when you feel the urge to smoke.

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Here are two tips for success:

1. Exercise can help you manage the stress and cravings when quitting. You'll feel better, too!
2. Recognizing what makes you want to smoke, vape or use nicotine is key. This can include things like stress, certain places, or social situations. Try to avoid or manage these triggers, especially at the beginning. Practice deep breathing exercises to help calm your body and mind. Slow, deep breaths can reduce stress and cravings.

The key takeaway is to get prepared. Start by creating a plan that fits your lifestyle.

- SET a quit date within the next 7 days. It is best to pick a weekday that doesn't look like it will be too stressful of a day.
- CHOOSE a method: cold turkey or gradually.
- DECIDE if you need help from a health care professional, nicotine replacement or medicine.
- PREPARE for your quit day by planning how to deal with cravings and urges.
- QUIT on your quit day.

## Let's Talk Sleep



How many hours of sleep do you get?

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Let's talk about sleep: How many hours of sleep do you get on average?

# Getting Enough Sleep

Aim for 7-9 hours every night



## Dim It

Dimming the lights before sleep helps signal to your brain that it's time to wind down.



## Set a Routine

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.

**Better sleep can improve brain function, improve mood, lower the risk of chronic disease and more!**

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Getting a good night's sleep every night is vital to your heart and brain health. Adults should aim for an average of 7-9 hours per night. Babies and kids need more depending on their age. Studies show that too little, too much sleep, or restless sleep is linked with heart disease. It is also linked to trouble thinking and remembering as you get older.

Your sleep affects your health in the following ways:

- Depression and anxiety
- Memory loss and dementia
- High blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol
- Obesity
- Heart disease

Sleep problems could be a sign that your brain needs help. Studies show that restless sleep, not getting enough sleep, or sleeping too much may be linked to memory and thinking problems later in life. Waking up frequently during the night could also be a warning sign.

Benefits of sleep:

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

- Stronger immune system
- Healing and repairing of cells, tissues and blood vessels
- Less risk of chronic disease

Here are two tips to get a better night's sleep:

1. Dimming the lights before sleep helps signal to your brain that it's time to wind down. Dim your screen or use a red filter app at night. The bright blue light of most devices can mess with your "internal clock" and melatonin production, a hormone that regulates sleep.
2. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. This helps regulate your body's internal clock and makes it easier to fall asleep and wake up naturally. Set a bedtime alarm to remind you it's time to wrap it up for the night.

The key takeaway is better sleep can improve brain function, improve mood, lower the risk of chronic disease and more!

## Let's Talk Food

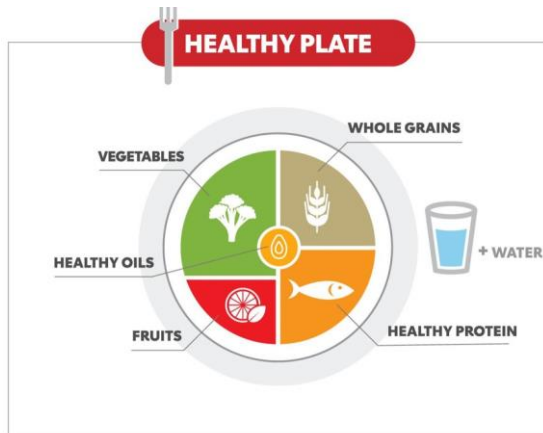


What are some easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables to meals?

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Now let's talk about food: What are some easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables to meals?

## Enjoying a Healthy Diet



### BUILD A HEALTHY PLATE

- ½ veggies and fruits
- ¼ whole grains such as brown rice
- ¼ protein such as beans, skinless chicken or fish



### REDUCE THE SALT YOU EAT

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Eating well-balanced meals throughout the day can help your heart and brain work at their best. Don't worry about "special meals" — the best choice is a variety of healthy foods.

Eat vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, and lean animal proteins. Also, drink plenty of water throughout the day. You can also enjoy unsweetened tea or coffee.

Limit sugary drinks and alcohol. Eat fewer salty and fatty foods, as well as processed meats. Limit foods like butter, whole milk, high-fat yogurt, and cheese. Remove the skin from poultry before cooking. Use vegetable oils, such as olive, canola, or avocado oil, instead of oils like coconut or palm oil. Avoid trans fats. Trans fats are found in some store-bought baked goods and fried foods.

### Two tips for success:

- Build a healthy plate. You can take a picture of this to remember what a healthy plate should look like.
- Cut back on salt. There are many salt substitutes you can use to keep your food tasty without too much salt. Salt substitutes can help lower high blood pressure.

It's also important to read nutrition labels and check serving sizes on packages. If you're looking for inspiration, the American Heart Association has hundreds of delicious, affordable recipes. Visit [heart.org/recipes](https://heart.org/recipes) to explore them.

## The Truth About Salt



Sodium is part of salt. Ideally, you should eat no more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a teaspoon of salt in total for the day.

When you eat too much sodium, your body holds on to extra water to balance it out. This adds more fluid to your blood vessels, raising your blood pressure and making your heart work harder.

Too much sodium can also lower the effects of some blood pressure medications.

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Sodium is a part of salt. Ideally, you should eat no more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a teaspoon of salt in total for the day.

A lot of prepared foods already come with salt/sodium, which is why it's important to look for "low sodium" labels, especially in food that is already prepared, canned or frozen.

When you eat too much sodium, your body holds on to extra water to balance it out. This adds more fluid to your blood vessels, raising your blood pressure and making your heart work harder. Too much sodium can also lower the effects of some blood pressure medications.



## Potassium Salt Substitutes



In adults, potassium-based salt substitutes can help prevent or treat high blood pressure, especially for those who use salt mainly in cooking or flavoring at home. However, extra monitoring is needed for patients with chronic kidney disease or those taking medications that reduce potassium excretion.

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Getting more potassium from foods can help lower high blood pressure. Potassium-based salt substitutes can also help prevent or treat high blood pressure, especially for those who use salt mainly in cooking or flavoring at home. Getting more potassium from foods can help lower high blood pressure. But if someone has kidney disease or takes medication that keeps potassium in the body, they may need to be monitored more closely.

## Let's Talk Exercise



What is **moderate activity**  
or **vigorous activity**?

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We all know that moving more is important. The American Heart Association recommends adults should get a weekly total of at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of the two.

## The Goal is to Move More



**Moderate activity** can include walking, dancing, gardening and even house cleaning.

**Vigorous activity** can include running, swimming, biking and jumping rope.

**The goal is to get your heart pumping!**

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity **or** 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity every week.

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Answers: Moderate activity can include walking, dancing, gardening and even house cleaning. Vigorous activity can include running, swimming, biking and jumping rope. The goal is to get your heart pumping!

## Being More Active



### Exercise is great for your brain!

Moving your body regularly can make you feel happier and less stressed and helps with memory!

### Start small

Start with a walk around the block at lunchtime or after dinner to help you de-stress. Continue building on it until it becomes a habit.

### Change your mindset

Think outside the gym! Playing with kids, dancing, gardening and mall walking all count!

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We all know that moving more is important. The American Heart Association recommends adults should get a weekly total of at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of the two. Moving more is essential. Exercise is like a workout for your heart and brain. Getting active, even just going outside for a walk, can help you feel better. It can reduce stress, improve your mood and help you feel recharged. You can do both moderate and vigorous activity and spread it throughout the week. Try to include activities that also make your muscles stronger at least twice a week. Lifting weights, squats, lunges and crunches are great examples of strength training exercises.

Two tips for success:

1. Change your mindset: Exercise isn't another to-do on your list. Think of it

as a moment you dedicate to yourself to help you unplug, recharge and clear your mind.

2. Start by making exercise a habit: Do something active every day at about the same time so it becomes a regular habit. Put it on your schedule so you're less likely to miss a day.

The key takeaway is to be patient. It can take approximately 2 months to form a habit. So stick with your exercise routine!

## Additional Movement Ideas



For adults with or without high blood pressure, in addition to lifestyle changes or medication, other forms of stress management that may help prevent or treat elevated or high blood pressure include:

- Breathing control techniques
- Yoga
- Transcendental meditation

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In addition to lifestyle changes and medications, other stress management activities that may help prevent or treat elevated or high blood pressure include:

- Breathing control techniques
- Yoga
- Meditation

## Don't Forget



1. Controlling your blood pressure is the best way to keep your heart and brain healthy.
2. Most people with high blood pressure don't have symptoms.
3. Talk to your health care professional if you have any risk factors.
4. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80.
5. You have the power to start making small changes today.

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To wrap up today's presentation, don't forget:

1. Controlling your blood pressure is the best way to keep your heart and brain healthy.
2. Most people with high blood pressure don't have symptoms.
3. Talk to your health care professional if you have any risk factors.
4. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80.
5. You have the power to start making small changes today.

## Make a Commitment



**Get your blood pressure checked**



**Which small change will you start this week?**

- Take a walk after dinner
- Set a bedtime alarm
- Add a serving of veggies

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If you don't know your blood pressure, get it checked. It only takes a few minutes. You can do it at home, at a local pharmacy or with your health care professional.

Start with one small change. Take a moment to think of what it is now. It could be as simple as:

- Taking a walk after dinner
- Setting a bedtime alarm
- Adding a serving of veggies



## Stay In Touch



Follow us **@AmericanHeart** on social media and DM us to let us know how you're doing!



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Thank you for your time. I hope you enjoyed this presentation. I invite you to keep in touch with the American Heart Association. You can follow them on social media for great, easy to follow health tips you can trust!