

What's the matter with high blood pressure?

5 ways to lower blood pressure to protect your health & your heart

Ever wonder why your blood pressure gets checked at every doctor's appointment, and sometimes at the dentist?

Or why nearly every pharmacy has a free blood pressure check station?

Nearly half of all Americans have high blood pressure, and most feel fine.¹

There are almost never any symptoms or warning signs for high blood pressure.

No ache, no dizziness, no bad afternoon that tips you off.

You feel fine while it silently damages your heart, arteries, kidneys, and brain.

Left unchecked, high blood pressure is linked to:²

- Heart attack and stroke
- Kidney disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Dementia



Nearly half of all adults in the U.S. have high blood pressure, and most feel fine. But left unchecked, high blood pressure increases the risk for heart attack, stroke, and other health problems.

Blood pressure: Know your numbers
The next time you get checked, pay attention to the numbers.³



Why it matters: High blood pressure often has no symptoms, but it can increase your risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and more.

If your blood pressure is higher than normal, can lowering it by just a little make a difference? Yes.

Research shows that dropping the top number (systolic) by 10 points may cut your risk of:²

- **Stroke** by 27 percent
- **Heart failure** by 28 percent
- **Heart disease** by 17 percent



ways to lower your blood pressure

You don't need a life overhaul. A few everyday habits do most of the work.



1. Eat more whole foods

More vegetables, fruit, whole

BLOOD PRESSURE ►

► BLOOD PRESSURE

low-fat dairy. Less fried food, red meat, and sugary drinks.

Eating this way can lower blood pressure 5 points or more in four weeks. That's half your 10 points, in a month.⁴

✓ 2. Move most days

Activity makes your heart stronger, so it pumps blood with less force. Aim for 30 minutes. A brisk walk counts. So does yard work.

✓ 3. Cut back on sodium

Extra sodium makes your body hold onto water, and that fluid pushes harder against your artery walls.

Most of it isn't from your shaker. It's already in packaged food.

✓ 4. Protect your sleep and go easy on alcohol

Blood pressure is supposed to dip



A normal blood pressure reading is below 120/80. If your blood pressure is elevated or high, healthy eating, regular exercise, lifestyle habits and medication can help.

while you sleep. Short nights cut that break short.⁵ Alcohol raises it directly.

whether medication makes sense for you. That's not a failure. It's the next step.

✓ 5. Ask your doctor

Give these changes 3 to 6 months to work. If your numbers are still up, ask

You can manage your blood pressure with diet, exercise, lifestyle habits, and medication if needed. But none of it starts until you know your number.

So the next time someone offers to check your blood pressure, at the pharmacy, the dentist, or a screening at work, say yes.



References

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