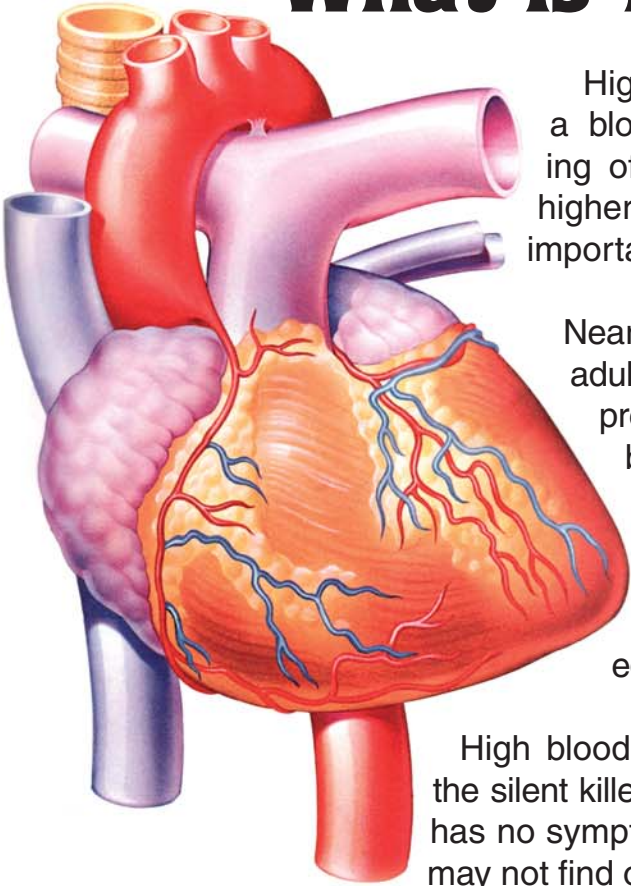


hypertension

What is High Blood Pressure?



High blood pressure is a blood pressure reading of 140/90 mmHg or higher. Both numbers are important.

Nearly 1 in 3 American adults has high blood pressure. Once high blood pressure develops, it usually lasts a lifetime. The good news is that it can be treated and controlled.

High blood pressure is called the silent killer because it usually has no symptoms. Some people may not find out they have it until they have trouble with their heart, brain, or kidneys. When high blood pressure is not found and treated, it can cause:

- The heart to get larger, which may lead to heart failure.

- Small bulges (aneurysms [AN-u-risms]) to form in blood vessels. Common locations are the main artery from the heart (aorta); arteries in the brain, legs, and intestines; and the artery leading to the spleen.
- Blood vessels in the kidney to narrow, which may cause kidney failure.
- Arteries throughout the body to "harden" faster, especially those in the heart, brain, kidneys, and legs. This can cause a heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, or amputation of part of the leg.
- Blood vessels in the eyes to burst or bleed, which may cause vision changes and can result in blindness.

Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH). Available @ www.nih.gov

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Home Monitoring Helps Control Blood Pressure

Checking your blood pressure at home is an important part of managing high blood pressure (hypertension). Not only does it help you to keep track, it can help make certain your medication is working and alert you and your doctors to potential health problems.

Blood pressure monitors are available without a prescription. No matter what brand you choose, proper use requires some practice and training. Arm cuffs are considered more accurate – we recommend against wrist or finger devices. Follow these tips to help ensure accuracy when you measure your blood pressure at home:

- Before using a monitor for the first time, have your doctor or nurse check its accuracy against the office model. Also have your doctor or nurse watch how you use the device so that he or she can see if you're doing it properly.
- Take your blood pressure at consistent times, such as in the morning and in the evening.
- Use the same arm whenever you take your blood pressure. Note that many digital monitors are meant for use only on the left arm.
- Don't measure your blood pressure immediately after you wake in the morning. Wait an hour or so. If you exercise after waking, take your blood pressure before exercising.
- Avoid food, caffeine, tobacco and alcohol for 30 minutes before taking a measurement.
- Go to the toilet first. A full bladder can increase blood pressure slightly.
- Sit quietly for three to five minutes before taking a measurement.
- Sit in a comfortable position with your legs and ankles uncrossed and your back supported against a chair.
- Rest your arm, raised to the level of your heart, on a table, desk or chair arm. You may need to place a pillow or cushion under your arm to elevate it high enough.
- Don't talk while taking your blood pressure.
- Place the cuff on bare skin, not over clothing. Rolling up a sleeve until it tightens around your arm can result in an inaccurate reading, so you may need to slip your arm out of the sleeve.
- Take a repeat reading two to three minutes after the first one to check accuracy.
- If your monitor doesn't automatically log blood pressure readings or heart rates, write them down in your own log.
- Take the monitor to your doctors' office annually to check its accuracy against the office model. If you drop the device or damage it, it may no longer work properly.

Source: Medline Plus. Available @ www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Physical Activity Can Also:

- **Make you feel more energetic.**
- **Help you lose weight and control your appetite**
- **Help you sleep better**
- **Lower your chance for diabetes**
- **Lower your chance for a stroke**
- **Lower your blood pressure**
- **Improve your blood cholesterol levels**

Source: National Heart Lung & Blood (NHLBI). Available @ www.nhlbi.nih.gov

How Is High Blood Pressure Treated?

Usually, the goal is to keep your blood pressure below 140/90 mmHg (130/80 mmHg if you have diabetes or chronic kidney disease). Ask your doctor what your blood pressure goal should be.

Some people can prevent or control high blood pressure by changing to healthier habits, such as:

- Following the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan, which includes cutting down on salt and sodium and eating healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products
- Losing excess weight and staying at a healthy weight
- Being physically active (for example, walking 30 minutes every day)
- Quitting smoking
- Limiting alcohol intake

Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH). Available @ www.nih.gov

Scrumptious Meat Loaf

Use extra lean ground beef to lower the fat content in this meat loaf.

1 lb ground beef, extra lean
 1/2 cup tomato paste (4 ozs)
 1/4 cup onion, chopped
 1/4 cup green peppers
 1/4 cup red peppers
 1 cup tomatoes, fresh,
 blanched, chopped
 1/2 tsp mustard, low sodium
 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
 1/2 tsp hot pepper, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, chopped
 2 stalks scallion, chopped
 1/2 tsp ginger, ground
 1/8 tsp nutmeg, ground
 1 tsp orange rind, grated
 1/2 tsp thyme, crushed
 1/4 cup bread crumbs,
 finely grated

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Place in 1-pound loaf pan (preferably a pan with a drip rack) and bake covered at 350° F for 50 minutes.
3. Uncover pan and continue baking for 12 minutes.

Makes 6 servings
 Serving size: 6 (1-1/4-inch) thick slices
 Calories 193 • Fat 9 g
 Saturated fat 3 g • Cholesterol 45 mg
 Sodium 91 mg



Source: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/syah/index.htm

Hypertension Management – Understanding High Blood Pressure

This newsletter, courtesy of FHCP, is part of an educational series of mailings for **Controlling High Blood Pressure**. Topics discussed concern diet, exercise and medications for high blood pressure.

This program is **free** to all our members. Enrollment forms to join the mailing list are available from your Primary Care Physician's office.

Attention Members:

To have your name removed from our mailing list for the **Controlling High Blood Pressure** newsletter: detach this portion, print your name & sign below.

Mail to: Florida Health Care Plans, 1340 Ridgewood Ave., Rm. 310, Holly Hill, FL 32117.

Signature: _____

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Have you created an iHealth Personal Health Record?

The iHealth Record is a no-cost, secure and confidential interactive record that allows you to store, update and share health information with your physician. You can also use this service to communicate with your physician for appointment requests, prescription refills and for general questions, such as: when is my appointment or how much is my copay.

Your iHealth Personal Health record also enables you to access education programs developed by trusted health authorities. These programs are designed to assist you to better understand and manage your health; offering information about diseases and medications to treat certain conditions.

If you haven't already signed up for an iHealth Personal Health Record, go to www.fhcp.medem.com and select New User to register.