




7 TIPS TO AVOID HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION)

Wellness Tips


HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Nearly half of all adults in the US have high blood pressure, or hypertension, and most are unaware that they do. Commonly referred to as “the silent killer”, high blood pressure often shows no symptoms but causes serious problems throughout the body when left untreated. Damage occurs in the blood vessels which can lead to disease in the eyes, heart, and kidneys. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a significant risk factor for heart attack and stroke. In many cases, the only way to know that you have high blood pressure is to have it checked.


SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

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- ✓ Headaches
 - ✓ Nosebleeds
 - ✓ Shortness of breath
 - ✓ Vision changes
 - ✓ Chest pain
 - ✓ Dizziness

RISKS:

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- ✓ Age (greater than 65)
 - ✓ Family history
 - ✓ Race (more common African heritage)
 - ✓ Being overweight
 - ✓ Smoking
 - ✓ Stress
 - ✓ Too much alcohol
 - ✓ Too much salt (sodium) in diet
 - ✓ Lack of exercise

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

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- ✓ Heart attack or stroke
 - ✓ Kidney disease
 - ✓ Heart failure
 - ✓ Aneurysm
 - ✓ Dementia
 - ✓ Vision problems (Retinopathy)

TIPS FOR PREVENTION

The good news is that you can prevent high blood pressure and manage it successfully through healthy lifestyle choices and medications if needed. Follow these 7 tips for prevention and management:



1.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Lowering your body weight by even 3 lbs can result in a reduction in your blood pressure.



2.

Make Sleep a Priority

Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day. Give yourself at least an hour before bed free from electronics like phone and TV. Avoid caffeine after 3 pm. Contrary to popular belief, alcohol does not help with good sleep.



3.

Manage Stress

Stress itself can increase your blood pressure but the ways you handle stress are even more important. Consider meditation, yoga, or enjoying a favorite hobby like reading or gardening to help relieve stress.



4.

Limit Alcohol Use

Limiting your alcohol use to 1 drink for women and 2 drinks for men can reduce your blood pressure by 4 points. (1 drink= 5 oz wine, 12 oz beer, or 1.5 oz liquor). Alcohol contains calories that can cause weight gain and interfere with certain blood pressure medications.



5.

Follow a Heart Healthy Diet

Increase fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. Limit processed foods, limit sodium, and consume a diet adequate in potassium such as broccoli, leafy greens, and sweet potatoes. Potassium helps relax blood vessel walls. Refer to www.heart.org/dash for information on the DASH eating program.



6.

Increase Physical Activity

New guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week such as brisk walking, biking, or active yoga. Try to find ways to move at work such as taking the stairs, walking to a co-workers desk instead of emailing, and taking time during your lunch break to walk.



7.

Schedule an Annual Physical

Routine blood pressure measurements should be taken at least once every 2 years for adults with normal blood pressure (less than 120/80) and every year for those 120-139/80-89. Those already diagnosed with hypertension may require more frequent checks.

#ibpwellnesstips
Healthier Together

References: Mayo Clinic

American Heart Association

2019 ACC/AHA Guidelines on the Primary Prevention and Treatment of Hypertension

Disclaimer: Please note that these tip sheets are educational and are not intended for diagnosis and/or treatment. Discuss any symptoms you have with a physician.