

ARE YOU AT RISK?

QUIKRISK™ SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

The only sure way to know whether your blood pressure is high is to have it checked. However, this test can help you determine whether blood pressure could be a problem for you. Circle the appropriate response next to each true statement and add up your total.

	Yes	No	
<i>I'm a man over 45 or woman over 55 years of age.</i>	10	0	
<i>I am African-American.</i>	10	0	
<i>My family has a history of high blood pressure.</i>	10	0	
<i>I am overweight.</i>	10	0	
<i>I have diabetes, gout or kidney disease.</i>	10	0	
<i>I take birth control pills.</i>	10	0	
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
<i>I drink more than 1-2 alcoholic beverages a day.</i>	10	5	0
<i>I tend to be sedentary (rarely exercising).</i>	10	5	0
<i>I eat foods high in saturated fat.</i>	10	5	0
<i>I eat foods high in sodium (salt).</i>	10	5	0

HOW DID YOU DO?

If you scored 0-25 points, you are probably at low risk for high blood pressure.

If your total was 30-50, you may be at medium risk. Discuss it with your health care provider during your next visit.

If you scored 55-75 points, you could be at medium-high risk. Schedule some time with your provider to discuss high blood pressure very soon.

If you scored from 80-100, you may be considered at high risk for hypertension. Consult your health care provider without delay.

Don't know your blood pressure? Get tested, no matter what your score.

Fast Facts About Blood Pressure

- **Quitting smoking helps.** The nicotine in cigarette smoke raises blood pressure and heart rate by narrowing blood vessels, making your heart work harder. Talk to your health care provider about strategies to quit.
- **Testing blood pressure can raise it.** Some patients experience anxiety in the doctor's office that elevates their blood pressure, a condition known as "white coat hypertension." If your doctor suspects this has occurred, you may be shown how to monitor your blood pressure at home to get more accurate readings.
- **Tracking your numbers is important.** If you monitor your blood pressure at home (using a cuff, the preferred method), be sure to have the instrument calibrated yearly.
- **Keeping track of medications matters, too.** It's important to take your blood pressure medication at the same time each day. Try linking it with another regular activity, such as brushing your teeth.
- **Other medicines may interfere.** If you have hypertension or are taking prescribed medication, consult with your health care provider before taking any supplements or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. OTC medicines such as decongestants can raise blood pressure and interfere with treatment.
- **Blood pressure can be too low.** Generally, the lower your blood pressure, the better. But your doctor should investigate unusually low readings to rule out heart failure, severe infection or other illness.
- **High blood pressure is often preventable.** Even if your blood pressure is normal, taking steps now can help you prevent hypertension later — and keep your numbers low.



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

YOUR GUIDE TO MANAGING BLOOD PRESSURE



A SILENT KILLER

Nearly one in three adults has high blood pressure. Of those, 30 percent don't know they have it because high blood pressure, or hypertension, often has no symptoms. Yet it contributes to more than 200,000 deaths annually. That's why it is sometimes called a silent killer.

High blood pressure increases the work demand on your heart. It directly contributes to artery disease, which can lead to heart attack, stroke or kidney failure. But hypertension is easily detected and usually treatable. Whether you're healthy or have been diagnosed with hypertension, this brochure can help you keep your blood pressure under control.

What the Numbers Mean

The first (higher) number represents the systolic pressure exerted as your heart is pumping blood to the rest of your body when it beats. The second (lower) number represents the diastolic pressure exerted by the heart at rest, between beats. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg). A level below 120/80 ("120 over 80") is considered ideal.

Numbers at a Glance

CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC (mm Hg)	DIASTOLIC (mm Hg)
Normal	less than 120 and	less than 80
Prehypertension	120-139 or	80-89
High	140 or higher or	90 or higher

Anyone Can Have Hypertension!

But certain factors put you at greater risk, such as getting older, being overweight, heavy alcohol consumption, lack of exercise, presence of certain diseases, use of birth control pills, salt (sodium) sensitivity, or race (African-Americans are more likely to develop high blood pressure).

Try taking the quiz on the facing panel. It's a good first step in determining your risk for high blood pressure.



7 Steps to Blood Pressure Control

1. Get your numbers checked. Experts recommend having your blood pressure checked at least every one to two years by a health care professional. **Tip:** Sit quietly for five minutes before testing for a more accurate reading.

2. Watch your weight. Being overweight is a risk factor for hypertension because blood pressure rises as body weight

increases. Losing even 10 pounds can lower blood pressure, most dramatically in those who are overweight and already have hypertension.

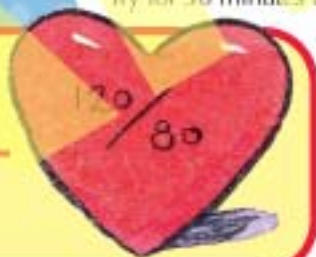
3. Cut back on dietary fats. They're high in calories and can contribute to obesity and high blood pressure. Especially limit saturated fats found in butter, whole-milk dairy products and red meats ... and trans fats found in stick margarines, vegetable shortening, fried foods, baked goods and other processed foods.

4. Keep moving. Exercise helps you reach and maintain a healthy weight and lowers blood pressure. Try for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, such as walking or biking, on most days of the week.

5. Limit alcohol if you drink. Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure. If you drink alcohol, make it no more than two drinks a day for men and one for women.

6. Go easy on salt. Salty foods by themselves do not cause hypertension. But for some people, especially the elderly or African-Americans, excess salt may elevate blood pressure. It can't be determined who is salt-sensitive, so cutting back is wise for everyone.

7. Take medication as directed. If your doctor prescribes blood pressure medicine, keep taking it, as prescribed, even if you feel fine.



Are You Overweight?

To find out, calculate your body mass index (BMI). It gives an approximation of total body fat. As BMI goes up, so does your risk of high blood pressure.

To calculate BMI:

1. Multiply your weight in pounds by 703.
2. Divide that number by your height in inches squared (height x height).

Overweight is defined as BMI of 25 to 29.9.
Obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 or more.

... And Heart Helpers to Add to the Menu

FIBER. Fiber-rich foods tend to be high in vitamins and minerals and low in fat. Plus, they fill you up and help satisfy your appetite, helping you control your weight.

Good sources: Fruits and vegetables; whole-grain breads, pastas, rice and cereals; and legumes such as dried peas, beans and lentils.

POTASSIUM. Research has shown that potassium may help lower blood pressure. **Good sources:** Low- or non-fat dairy foods; fresh fish; and fruits and vegetables, especially cooked spinach, dried prunes, lima beans, winter squash and tomato sauce.

MAGNESIUM. Diets low in magnesium may raise blood pressure. You can get plenty of magnesium from the foods you eat, especially whole grains, leafy green vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes.

FISH OILS. Studies have linked omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in fish oils, with lower blood pressure. **Good sources:** mackerel, lake trout, herring, sardines, albacore tuna and salmon.

Overall, diets rich in these nutrients plus calcium — and low in fat and cholesterol — have been shown to help lower blood pressure. **The bottom line:** Be sure to eat a varied low-fat diet with plenty of plant foods.

