



FROM THE OFFICE OF DR.

Ten tips to help you control your high blood pressure

1 Make sure your blood pressure is under 140/90 mm Hg. If your systolic pressure (the top number) is over 140, ask your doctor what you can do to lower it.

2 Take your high blood pressure medicine, if prescribed, every day. If you have questions, talk to your doctor.

3 Aim for a healthy weight. If you are overweight or obese, carrying this extra weight increases your risk of high blood pressure. One way to determine if you need to lose weight is to find out your body mass index (BMI). If your BMI is above the healthy range (25 or greater), or if your waist measurement is greater than 35 inches (women) or 40 inches (men), you probably have excess abdominal weight and may benefit from weight loss—especially if you have other risk factors. Talk to your doctor to see if you are at increased risk for high blood pressure and need to lose weight.

4 Increase your physical activity to least 30 minutes of moderate activity, such as walking, most days of the week. You can do 30 minutes in three 10-minute segments.

5 Choose foods low in salt and sodium. Most Americans should consume no more than 2.4 g (2,400 mg) of sodium a day. That equals

about one level teaspoon of table salt a day. For someone with high blood pressure, the doctor may advise less.

6 Read nutrition labels. Almost all packaged foods contain sodium. Every time you prepare or eat a packaged food, know how much sodium is in one serving.

7 Keep a sodium diary. You may be surprised at how much sodium you consume each day, and the diary will help you decide which foods to decrease or eliminate.

8 Use spices and herbs instead of salt to season food.

9 Eat more fruits, vegetables, grains, and low-fat dairy foods. Check out the DASH diet plan for delicious, heart-healthy recipes and menu ideas.

10 If you consume alcohol, consume moderate amounts. For men, this is less than two 12-oz servings of beer, two 5-oz glasses of wine, or two 1/2-oz servings of hard alcohol a day. Women or lighter-weight people should have no more than a single serving of any one of these beverages a day.

ADAPTED FROM THE NATIONAL HEART, BLOOD, AND LUNG INSTITUTE



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