

Taking the first step toward a healthy blood pressure.

Making lifestyle changes now can help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range—whether you have high blood pressure or you're trying to prevent it. You don't have to make big changes all at once. Small steps can get you where you want to go. Here are some ideas to start. If you have elevated blood pressure and your doctor prescribes medications, make sure to take them as directed.



Why should I change?



Eat Healthy Foods

A diet **low in sodium and saturated fat**—like the DASH eating plan—can lower your blood pressure as effectively as medicines.



Move More

Get at least 2½ hours of physical activity a week to help lower and control blood pressure. That's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.



Aim for a Healthy Weight

Losing just 3 to 5 percent of your weight can improve your blood pressure. If you weigh 200 lbs., that's a weight loss of 6 to 10 lbs.



Manage Stress

Stress can contribute to high blood pressure and other heart risks. If it goes on for a long time, it can make your body store more fat.



Stop Smoking

The **chemicals in tobacco smoke** can harm your heart and blood vessels. Quitting is hard. But many people have done it, and you can, too.

How can I change?

- Add **one fruit or vegetable** to every meal.
- If you get fast food, ask for a **salad instead of fries**.
- Give **Meatless Monday** a try.
- Commit to **one salt-free day a week**. Use herbs for flavor instead.

- Invite a colleague for **regular walks or an exercise class**.
- Give the elevator a day off and **take the stairs**.
- Take a break to **play outside** with your kids.
- March in place** during commercial breaks while watching television with your family.

- Join a **weight loss program** with a buddy.
- Sign "social support" agreements** with three family members or friends.

- Practice **mindful meditation** for 10 minutes a day.
- Share a **funny video, joke, or inspirational quote** with a friend.
- Talk with your doctor** if you have trouble managing stress on your own.

- Visit **Smokefree.gov** or **BeTobaccoFree.hhs.gov** to connect with others trying to quit.
- Sign up for a **support group** at work or your local clinic.
- Join a **sewing, knitting, or woodworking group** to keep your hands busy when you get urges.

Take control of your blood pressure today! Learn more at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hypertension