

Managing Your High Blood Pressure

Eat A Healthy Diet

- Consider D.A.S.H. (**D**ietary **A**pproaches to **S**top **H**ypertension) eating plan from National Institutes of Health, which has been shown to reduce elevated blood pressure.
- Read food labels. Consume less than 2,300 mg of sodium a day, and if you already have high blood pressure, the recommendation is less than 1,500 mg of sodium daily.
- Limit sodium in the foods you eat, especially added salt, processed foods, and canned soups.
- Potassium helps to prevent and control high blood pressure. Choose fruits and vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes, lima beans and bananas.
- Learn more about healthy eating and the D.A.S.H. eating plan from Optima's "Eating for Life" program.

Maintain A Healthy Weight

- Being overweight increases your risk of developing high blood pressure.
- Losing even 10 pounds can lower blood pressure and has the greatest effect for those who are overweight and already have hypertension.

Stay Physically Active

- Being physically active can prevent or control high blood pressure, and reduce your risk of heart disease.
- Your goal should be at least 30 minutes of moderate-level physical activity on most days of the week, like brisk walking, bicycling, raking leaves, and gardening.

Limit Alcohol Intake

- Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, have only a moderate amount, one drink a day for women; two drinks a day for men. Check with your physician about how your health may be affected by drinking alcohol.

Don't Smoke

- Smoking injures blood vessel walls and speeds up the process of hardening of the arteries.
- If you smoke, quit. If you don't smoke, don't start. Once you quit, your risk of having a heart attack is reduced after the first year.

Take Your Medication

- **If your doctor has prescribed medication for your high blood pressure make sure you take it every day.**

Get Regular Check-Ups with Your Physician

- Visit your doctor regularly to have your weight and blood pressure checked, and to schedule preventive health screenings.

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