

Living With High Blood Pressure: Your Daily Guide

Medical-Surgical · Cardiovascular

High blood pressure damages your heart, brain, and kidneys, even when you feel well. Daily treatment and home checks help protect them.

Get ready to check

- Use an upper-arm monitor with a cuff that fits.
- Avoid smoking, caffeine, and exercise for 30 minutes before checking.
- Empty your bladder. Sit quietly for 5 minutes.

Measure and write it down

- Support your back. Keep feet flat and legs uncrossed.
- Rest your bare arm at heart level. Do not talk.
- Take 2 readings, 1 minute apart, at the same times daily.
- Record both. Your usual goal is below 130/80 mm Hg.
- Your personal goal: _____.

Choose foods with less salt

- Choose vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, and low-fat dairy.
- Keep sodium below 2,300 mg daily; 1,500 mg suits many people.
- Your sodium goal: _____ mg daily.

Move often and limit alcohol

- Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity each week, as advised.
- Avoid alcohol. If you drink, limit it to 2 drinks daily for men or 1 for women.

- One drink: 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of liquor.

Take medicine every day

- Take it as directed, even when you feel well.
- Ask before using cold medicines, ibuprofen, or naproxen.
- Do not change doses yourself.

Call your provider today if you have

- **A top number above 180 OR a bottom number above 120 without symptoms:** wait at least 1 minute and check again. If still high, call immediately.
- Repeated dizziness or readings outside your care team's limits

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Very high pressure with chest pain, trouble breathing, severe back pain, or vision changes
- Sudden weakness, trouble speaking, confusion, or fainting at any reading
- **Do not wait to recheck when these symptoms occur.**

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/high-blood-pressure-self-care/patient

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