INFORM Yourself

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HEART DISEASE)

Exercise Your Way to Lower Blood Pressure
Your heart is a muscle. Just like any other muscle, exercise makes it stronger. The stronger your heart is, the less effort it takes for it to pump blood through your body and keep your blood pressure in check. Regular exercise gives your heart muscle—and the rest of your body—a good workout. This leads to reduced blood pressure and reduced stress. It can also lead to weight loss, which in turn can help lower blood pressure! Once your blood pressure is under control, regular exercise will help keep it there and prevent complications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week. You should spread your activity throughout the week, so a good way to get your time in is to exercise for 20 – 30 minutes a day. The effects of exercise are lost if you don’t do it consistently, so committing to a healthier lifestyle is essential.

Talk to your provider about an exercise plan that will work for you. Once you have their okay, it’s time to start moving!

Source: CDC, NIH Senior Health

Working With Your Provider on a Treatment Plan
High blood pressure can lead to poor circulation, vision problems, kidney disease, stroke, and heart disease or heart attack. Many of these can be life threatening, so controlling your blood pressure is key.

Your provider can help you develop a treatment plan to control your blood pressure. Treatment plans are tailored to each person. But, most plans include lifestyle changes such as the following:

• Quitting smoking
• Consuming less sodium (salt)
• Maintaining a healthy weight through exercise and diet
• Limiting alcohol intake
• Reducing stress

If lifestyle changes aren’t enough, your provider may add medication to your treatment plan. For more information, read the article on page 3.

As part of your treatment plan, your provider will help you set a blood pressure goal and tell you how often you should have your blood pressure checked. Your provider can also let you know how often you should schedule appointments and when you should seek medical care right away.

“Following your high blood pressure treatment plan can prevent heart disease and stroke. These events can limit your ability to care for yourself and your family. Treatment of high blood pressure may reduce headaches, chest pain, and dizziness, allowing you to focus on enjoying life with family and friends!”

Susan Paulson, MD, PrimeWest Health Chief Senior Medical Director

Illnesses and other health conditions can affect your blood pressure control. Your provider can help diagnose and monitor other problems. Your treatment plan may include regular exams, preventive health tests, and monitoring of your blood work. Your provider will also talk to you about getting a pneumonia vaccine and an annual flu vaccine.

The best way to keep your blood pressure under control is to follow your treatment plan. Talk with your provider if you don’t understand the plan, if you feel it isn’t working, or if you don’t think you can follow it. It’s your plan, so make sure it’s working for you!

Source: MedlinePlus
The DASH Eating Plan
Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) is an eating plan aimed at lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. This, in turn, helps reduce the risk of heart disease. ("Hypertension" is another way of saying high blood pressure.) When you follow the DASH plan, most of the food you eat will be vegetables, fruits, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products. You can also eat poultry, fish, nuts, beans, whole grains, and vegetable oils. The DASH plan suggests you significantly reduce the amount of red meat, sugary foods, and—especially—salt in your diet. Eating a lot of salt causes your body to retain fluid. This increases blood pressure.

A heart-healthy diet is one component of controlling your blood pressure. Ask your provider if the DASH eating plan is right for you.

Source: MedlinePlus

Smoke? Stop.
Why should I quit?
In addition to the other ways smoking harms your health, it can also damage your heart and blood vessels. This contributes to high blood pressure and heart disease. If you smoke, it’s important to talk to your provider about quitting.

How can your provider help you quit?
You and your provider can come up with a plan to help you quit smoking. They can give you information and connect you with helpful services. Your provider can also write prescriptions for medications and products that can help you quit.

What else can you do to help yourself quit?
• Visit www.smokefree.gov. You can find tools and tips, chat with an expert, and build a quit plan.
• Talk to your family and friends.
• Find information and help online. The American Lung Association (www.lung.org), the American Heart Association (www.heart.org), Medline Plus (www.medlineplus.gov), and the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) are all great resources.

When should I quit?
Today! There is no better time than today to take control of your health and quit smoking. It’s not an easy task, but with help you can succeed!

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Care Coordination and Case Management: We’re Here for You
PrimeWest Health provides Care Coordination and Case Management programs to help keep members healthy. These programs let us work with you and your health care providers to make sure you get the services you need. Your care coordinator or case manager can do the following:

• Help you when you have questions about your health care or prescriptions
• Schedule medical appointments as needed
• Promote good health practices that may prevent problems
• Help arrange services you need to stay safe and healthy at home

PrimeWest Health encourages you to take advantage of these programs. Let your care coordinator or case manager know when and how they can help you get the care and services you need. If you do not know who your care coordinator or case manager is, call one of the following:

• Member Services at 1-866-431-0801
• Jennifer at 1-888-588-4420 ext. 5342
• TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711

These calls are free.
Supporting Someone with High Blood Pressure

Knowing your loved one has high blood pressure is hard, especially if you’re not sure how to help. Let your loved one know you want to help and ask if the person will accept your assistance. If the answer is no, it doesn’t mean your offer isn’t appreciated. Simply making the offer shows you care and lets your loved one know you are there to help if needed. If the answer is yes, a good way to give support is by helping your loved one make and maintain lifestyle changes.

- **Help with eating healthy.** You can find recipes and recommend food that is part of a heart-healthy diet. Because salt should be limited, you can try using lemon juice, lime juice, or even a small amount of vinegar as a natural salt substitute. Spices, chilies, and herbs can also add flavor without salt. These methods are healthier than using commercially prepared salt substitutes that can be high in potassium and that may not be safe for everyone. Make sure your loved one checks with a provider before using these products.

- **Help with staying active.** Work out with your loved one or plan fun activities like bike rides or hiking. Staying active helps reduce stress and maintain a healthy weight.

- **Help with breaking unhealthy habits.** If you are a smoker and your loved one is trying to quit smoking, consider quitting, too. At the very least, try not to smoke around the person. Similarly, you can help your loved one decrease their alcohol intake by decreasing your own.

- **Help with following instructions.** Offer to help your loved one remember to take their medication. You can also ask if assisting with home blood pressure monitoring would be helpful.

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Do You Have White Coat Syndrome?

Your blood pressure is usually higher when you are anxious. One time you may feel anxious is when you go to a medical appointment. This anxiety is normal. It’s so normal that it has a name: white coat syndrome.

If you are anxious at your provider’s office when you get your blood pressure taken, the reading may not be accurate. Your provider may want you to monitor your blood pressure with an automatic blood pressure monitor that you can use at home. When you’re in a more comfortable setting, you might find that your blood pressure readings are lower than they are at your provider’s office. On the other hand, if you do have elevated blood pressure, monitoring your blood pressure at home will help confirm it.

If you need to monitor your blood pressure at home, it is important to make sure you are using the monitor correctly. Your provider can show you how to use it and verify it is working. Keep a log of your home blood pressure readings. Along with each reading, record the date and time it was taken. Bring this log with you each time you visit your provider.

If you have questions about how to get an automatic blood pressure monitor, call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801. TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711. These calls are free. You can also talk to your care coordinator, county case manager, or your provider.

Source: MedlinePlus

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Blood Pressure Medications

Your provider may prescribe medications as part of your treatment plan. The key thing to know about blood pressure medication? It won’t help if you don’t take it! These medications can only do their job if you take them every day, as directed by your provider. Don’t stop taking your medication without talking to your provider.

Blood pressure medications don’t cause side effects in most people. But, some people do have them. The most common side effects are headache, nausea, and dizziness. Seek medical care if these or any other symptoms are severe.

Other medications and dietary supplements can interact with blood pressure medications. It’s important to let your provider know what other medications or supplements you take or plan to take. Also tell your provider if you are pregnant, planning on becoming pregnant, or are nursing. Many blood pressure medications aren’t safe to take in these cases.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Note: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider’s advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.
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أنا أحتاج إلى مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذا الملف، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

Mención: Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.
Civil Rights Notice

Discrimination is against the law. PrimeWest Health does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- marital status
- political beliefs
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by PrimeWest Health. You can file a complaint and ask for help filing a complaint in person or by mail, phone, fax, or email at:

Rebecca Fuller, Civil Rights Coordinator
PrimeWest Health
3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308
Toll Free: 1-866-431-0801
TTY: 1-800-627-3529 or 711
Fax: 1-320-762-8750
Email: rebecca.fuller@primewest.org

Auxiliary Aids and Services: PrimeWest Health provides auxiliary aids and services, like qualified interpreters or information in accessible formats, free of charge and in a timely manner to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in our health care programs. Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711. The call is free.

Language Assistance Services: PrimeWest Health provides translated documents and spoken language interpreting, free of charge and in a timely manner, when language assistance services are necessary to ensure limited English speakers have meaningful access to our information and services. Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711. The call is free.

Civil Rights Complaints
You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by PrimeWest Health. You may also contact any of the following agencies directly to file a discrimination complaint.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
You have the right to file a complaint with the OCR, a federal agency, if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion (in some cases)

Contact the OCR directly to file a complaint:
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Midwest Region
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
Customer Response Center: Toll-free: 800-368-1019
TDD Toll-free: 800-537-7697
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)
In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the MDHR if you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- public assistance status
- disability

Contact the MDHR directly to file a complaint:
Minnesota Department of Human Rights
540 Fairview Avenue North, Suite 201
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-539-1100 (voice)
800-657-3704 (toll-free)
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)
651-296-9042 (fax)
Info.MDHR@state.mn.us (email)

Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
You have the right to file a complaint with DHS if you believe you have been discriminated against in our health care programs because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion (in some cases)
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
Complaints must be in writing and filed within 180 days of the date you discovered the alleged discrimination. The complaint must contain your name and address and describe the discrimination you are complaining about. We will review it and notify you in writing about whether we have authority to investigate. If we do, we will investigate the complaint.

DHS will notify you in writing of the investigation’s outcome. You have the right to appeal if you disagree with the decision. To appeal, you must send a written request to have DHS review the investigation outcome. Be brief and state why you disagree with the decision. Include additional information you think is important.

If you file a complaint in this way, the people who work for the agency named in the complaint cannot retaliate against you. This means they cannot punish you in any way for filing a complaint. Filing a complaint in this way does not stop you from seeking out other legal or administrative actions.

Contact DHS directly to file a discrimination complaint:
Civil Rights Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

American Indians can continue or begin to use tribal and Indian Health Services (IHS) clinics. We will not require prior approval or impose any conditions for you to get services at these clinics. For elders age 65 years and older this includes Elderly Waiver (EW) services accessed through the tribe. If a doctor or other provider in a tribal or IHS clinic refers you to a provider in our network, we will not require you to see your primary care provider prior to the referral.