Welcome!
Welcome to PrimeWest Health’s Focused Wellness program for high blood pressure (heart disease). This program will help you learn more about how to manage your condition.

Blood pressure rises and falls throughout the day. When your blood pressure stays high for a long time, it can cause problems. For example, high blood pressure greatly increases your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Anyone can develop high blood pressure. According to the American Heart Association, more than 100 million American adults have high blood pressure. That means you’re not alone!

Source: American Heart Association

What Not to Do: Alcohol and Drugs
Alcohol and other substances can raise your blood pressure, especially if they are not used in moderation.

- **Alcohol.** Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure to unhealthy levels. If you drink, do so in moderation. “Moderation” typically means up to one drink per day for women or up to 2 drinks per day for men. Depending on alcohol content, “one drink” usually means 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.

- **Tobacco.** Smoking or chewing tobacco immediately raises your blood pressure temporarily. Long-term use can damage the lining of your blood vessels, which can make your blood pressure worse and lead to heart disease.

- **Illegal drugs.** Drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, LSD, and ecstasy/MDMA can alter your blood pressure so much that they can immediately trigger a heart attack or stroke. These drugs should be avoided completely.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Your Treatment Plan: The Path to Better Health

Developing a treatment plan will help you minimize the effects of high blood pressure. You and your health care provider can work together to develop one. You can share your treatment plan and other information about your condition with all of your health care providers and caregivers. You can do this by completing a form giving consent for them to see your health information. Talk with your care coordinator or your health care provider to learn more about this.

The following are 2 things that will likely be part of your treatment plan.

Keep your appointments

Be sure to keep your appointments with all the providers you see. This includes your primary care provider and specialists. This is key because it’s during these appointments that your providers check your blood pressure and make sure you aren’t having any issues that require a change in medication. You may also have lab work done to check for complications related to your high blood pressure.

Stick to your medications

It’s important that you take the medications your provider has prescribed the way they have been prescribed. This will help prevent complications and setbacks. Don’t stop taking any medications without talking to your health care provider first.

Make a treatment plan with your provider. Then, don’t just plan to follow it—commit to following it!
Exercising and Eating

In general, being overweight puts you at greater risk of developing health problems. You don’t have to lose a lot of weight to see health benefits. Losing 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure and reduce the strain on your heart. There is no magic formula for losing weight. The key is to exercise and eat right.

Exercising

Talk to your health care provider before you start exercising. Together, you can come up with activities that are both safe and fun for you to do. There are 3 types of exercise: cardiovascular (cardio), strength training, and stretching. You should try to make each a part of your exercise routine.

- **Cardiovascular exercise** is good for your heart and lungs. Examples include swimming, biking, walking, and jogging.
- **Strength training** strengthens your muscles. Examples include lifting weights and doing push-ups, sit-ups, and squats.
- **Stretching** makes you more flexible. It also helps you move better and helps prevent injury, so you may want to stretch for a bit before and after you exercise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends people get 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each 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.

Eating

Have you ever heard of the DASH eating plan? It stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. Hypertension is another way of saying high blood pressure. The DASH eating plan recommends that you eat foods that are low in fat and cholesterol. Another part of the plan is eating more vegetables and fruits and eating low- or non-fat dairy foods. The DASH eating plan includes foods like poultry, fish, whole grains, nuts, and foods that are high in potassium, magnesium, protein, and fiber. It recommends small amounts of fats, red meats, and sweets. Another thing you can do to help lower your blood pressure is to eat foods that are low in sodium (salt). You can find lots of articles about tracking and reducing sodium in your diet on the American Heart Association’s website at [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium](http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium).

Talk to your health care provider about a healthy approach to controlling your blood pressure through weight management, exercise, and diet. You can find more information about maintaining a healthy weight through exercise and diet on the American Heart Association’s website at [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/losing-weight](http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/losing-weight).

Remember that every time you see your health care provider, it’s your time to ask questions and get the answers you need to be the healthiest you can be.

- Express any concerns you have about your health.
- Make sure you understand the “whats”—what your health problem is, what you should do about it, and what steps to take next.
- Also ask your provider the “whys.” Sometimes understanding why you should do something will help motivate you to do it.
- If you don’t understand something, ask your provider to tell you more or to explain it using different words.

If you have questions after you leave your appointment, you can call your health care provider’s office. You can usually speak to a nurse or ask to leave a message for the provider you saw. Your provider will call you back.

Source: Institute for Healthcare Improvement

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**Source:** Institute for Healthcare Improvement
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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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

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 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

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 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

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 contact any of the following four 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:
Director
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 515F
HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
Customer Response Center: Toll-free: 800-368-1019
TDD 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 believe 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
• 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

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. After we get your complaint, 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 the outcome 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

PrimeWest Health Complaint Notice
You have the right to file a complaint with PrimeWest Health if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information
- disability (including mental or physical impairment)
- marital status
- age
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- sexual orientation
- national origin
- race
- color
- religion
- creed
- public assistance status
- political beliefs

You can file a complaint and ask for help in 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

American Indian Health Statement
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.