INFORM Yourself

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HEART DISEASE)

What Is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure (hypertension) is a common and serious medical condition. It happens when the force of the blood being pumped through your blood vessels is too strong. Blood pressure rises and falls during the day and is affected by things like activity level and stress. It can be normal to have high blood pressure for short periods of time. However, when it stays high for a long time, it can lead to several health problems, including the following:

- Vision loss
- Kidney disease and kidney failure
- Nerve damage
- Stroke
- Heart failure and heart attack
- Sexual dysfunction

Most people who have high blood pressure don’t have symptoms, and people can have it for years without knowing it. That’s why it’s important see your provider regularly to get your blood pressure checked. A check takes less than a minute, and early detection and treatment can prevent complications. If you do notice the following symptoms, contact your provider:

- Headaches
- Nose bleeds
- Facial flushing
- Dizziness
- Chest pain
- Increased or decreased urination
- Nausea/vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Trouble concentrating

High blood pressure is a chronic condition, but you can take steps to keep your blood pressure under control. You’ll learn about some of them in this issue.

Source: American Heart Association, National Center for Biotechnology Information

Kidney Health

Your kidneys are responsible for filtering waste from your blood. Chronic high blood pressure damages the blood vessels in your kidneys by causing them to stretch. This stretching makes the blood vessels weaker and keeps blood from flowing properly. When this happens, your kidneys can’t remove waste effectively. High blood pressure can eventually lead to kidney failure.

Your provider can use a urine or blood test to see if high blood pressure has damaged your kidneys. He will let you know how often you should have your kidney health checked.

Your provider may also refer you to a nephrologist. This is a provider who specializes in kidney health. Seeing this type of provider can be helpful if there is a possibility that high blood pressure is affecting your kidney function.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
Diagnosing High Blood Pressure

Your provider can diagnose high blood pressure. She will use a blood pressure cuff and a stethoscope to measure 2 things: Your systolic and diastolic pressure. The systolic measurement is the pressure of blood pushed through your blood vessels when your heart beats. The diastolic measurement is the pressure between heartbeats. When your blood pressure measurement is written down, the systolic reading is the first or top number. The diastolic reading is the second or bottom number.

Make sure your provider checks your blood pressure and tells you what it means. Ask if you have questions.

- Normal: Below 120/80
- Elevated: Systolic pressure between 120 – 129 and diastolic pressure below 80
- Stage 1: Systolic pressure between 130 – 139 or diastolic pressure between 80 – 89
- Stage 2: Systolic pressure at least 140 or diastolic pressure at least 90

If your reading falls in Stage 1 or Stage 2, you have high blood pressure.

Your health care provider may check your blood pressure readings while you are lying down, sitting, and standing. This is called orthostatic blood pressure monitoring. It is used to gather more information when there is a potential problem with your blood pressure.

Sources: American Heart Association, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

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/case manager can do the following:

- Help you when you have questions about your health care or prescriptions.
  - Find answers to your questions about what your medications are for, why you are taking them, and how to take them safely. Or, get help finding a new health care provider or specialist such as a behavioral health specialist or dentist in your area.
- Schedule medical appointments as needed.
  - It’s important to see your provider as recommended. But sometimes it’s hard to make an appointment. Your care coordinator or case manager can help with that!
- Help you learn good health practices that may prevent problems.
  - Get information on a wide range of health topics and work on a step-by-step action plan to reach your personal health goals.
- Help arrange services you need to stay safe and healthy at home.
  - Make sure you are getting the services you need. Get your care needs assessed and get help setting up assistive services.

PrimeWest Health encourages you to take advantage of these programs. Let your care coordinator or case manager know when and how she 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:

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

These calls are free.

The DASH Eating Plan

DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It is an eating plan aimed at lowering blood pressure. The plan recommends that you eat foods that are low in fat and cholesterol and limit the amount of red meat, sweets, and salt in your diet. Another part of the plan is eating more foods that are high in potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein, and fiber. Vegetables, fruits, low- or non-fat dairy products, poultry, fish, whole grains, and nuts are all good choices. Learn more about the DASH eating plan and ask your provider if it is right for you.

- Mayo Clinic: www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20048456

Source: NHLBI
Keep an Eye on Your Eye Health

High blood pressure damages the blood vessels in your body. This includes the ones in your eyes. When the vessels that supply blood to your retina (a part of your eye) are damaged, you can develop a condition called retinopathy. This can lead to blurry or distorted vision and even blindness. Poor blood flow to your optic nerve (the main nerve in your eye) is another concern. This can damage your optic nerve and cause bleeding in your eye and vision loss.

Because blood pressure can affect your eyesight, it is very important to have routine eye exams and to monitor your blood pressure. If you are having any problems with your vision, tell your provider right away. You may be referred to an ophthalmologist, a provider who specializes in eye and vision care.

Source: Mayo Clinic

A Treatment Plan for Blood Pressure Control

High blood pressure can make you more likely to develop certain health conditions and complications, some of which can land you in the hospital. This is why working with your provider to develop a blood pressure treatment plan is important. Your plan will likely include the following lifestyle changes.

Eat a healthy diet

A healthy diet can go a long way in keeping your blood pressure under control. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains promote healthy blood pressure, so eat more! Sodium (salt) can increase blood pressure, so eat less! Following the DASH eating plan may help you eat the right kinds of foods. Read more about it on page 2.

Exercise and maintain a healthy weight

Exercising regularly can reduce blood pressure and help you maintain a healthy weight or lose weight if needed. The American Heart Association recommends at least 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week and muscle-strengthening activities 2 days each week. Talk to your provider about how much you should exercise and which activities are right for you.

If you are overweight, losing weight can help lower your blood pressure. One way your provider may decide if losing weight would help is by measuring your body mass index (BMI). BMI is a measurement of body fat that takes into account weight and height. A BMI of 18.5 – 24.9 is considered healthy, 25 – 29 is considered overweight, and over 30 is considered obese. Your provider can refer you to specialists if you need help losing weight.

Stop smoking

Smoking damages your heart and blood vessels and contributes to high blood pressure. Your provider can help you come up with a plan to quit. He can also write prescriptions for medications and products that can help. You can also call Quit Partner at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). TTY users call 1-877-777-6534. These calls are free. Or, sign up on their website at www.QuitPartnerMN.com. Quit Partner offers text messaging, email, and phone support. There is no cost to PrimeWest Health members for this service; however, data and messaging rates from your cell phone provider may apply.

Learn to manage stress

Stress hormones increase your heart rate and cause your blood vessels to narrow. This can increase your blood pressure and have other effects on your health, especially if stress lasts a long time. Talk with your provider about ways to reduce stress. Ideas may include deep breathing exercises, reading, and physical activities like yoga, walking, or jogging.

Take your medication as prescribed

Your provider may prescribe one or more medications for your blood pressure. These can also help keep kidney disease from getting worse. So, be sure to take your medication as directed! Regular blood pressure checks help your provider tell how well your medication is working. Find out how often you should have yours checked. If you notice any signs of high blood pressure, such as dizziness or blurred vision, contact your provider. Your medication may need to be adjusted.

Sources: American Heart Association, Mayo Clinic

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Health and wellness or prevention information

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.
Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

Mلاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d’une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

โปรดทราบ. คุณสามารถติดต่อสอบถามรายละเอียดในแบบแปลเอกราชาธิมิวส์ ที่ใช้เทคโนโลยีเฉพาะจากมิวส์.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentii kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kennname bilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la’aan ah ee tarjumaadda (afeelinta) qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

Atención. 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

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.