

Preventing High Blood Pressure: Healthy Living Habits



By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range and lower your risk for heart disease and stroke.

A healthy lifestyle includes:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Getting enough physical activity
- Limiting alcohol use
- Not smoking

Healthy Diet

Choosing healthy meal and snack options can help you avoid high blood pressure and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eating foods low in salt (sodium) and high in potassium can lower your blood pressure.

Healthy Weight

Being overweight or obese increases your risk for high blood pressure. To determine if your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate your body mass index (BMI). If you know your weight and height, you can calculate your BMI on the Body Mass Index page in Avera's online Health Library. <http://avera.staywellsolutionsonline.com/Search/85.P00200>

Physical Activity

Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure. For adults, recommendations are moderate exercise, such as a brisk walk, 30 minutes a day five times per week or vigorous exercise, such as jogging, for 30 minutes three times per week. Children and adolescents should get one hour of physical activity every day.

Limited Alcohol

Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can raise your blood pressure. Men should have no more than two drinks per day, and women only one.

Do Not Smoke

Smoking, along with high blood pressure, is a proven risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Smoking will add to the harmful effects of high blood pressure. If you smoke, quit as soon as possible and stay away from secondhand smoke.



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