

Making a Plan

What goal(s) can you set for yourself now?

Before my next visit, I am going to:

- Begin losing some weight
- Start being more active
- Cut back on my use of alcohol
- Begin changing what I eat
- Quit or decrease my use of tobacco
- Take medicine as told by my doctor

Is there someone who can help you in reaching your goal(s)?

Name(s): _____

More Help

For more information about high blood pressure and heart disease, visit www.americanheart.org or www.startwithyourheart.com.

To find heart centers, lipid management centers for cholesterol, and hypertension management centers for high blood pressure, visit www.ncgoodhealthdirectory.com.

For assistance in quitting tobacco use, call the NC Quitline at: **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** or get online counseling at www.smokefree.gov.

We thank the Starting the Conversation Partners



Starting the Conversation

Are you ready to take steps to **lower your blood pressure?**

- I'm ready to make changes to lower my blood pressure, and I would like help.
- I'm not sure if I'm ready to make changes to lower my blood pressure, but I would like to start the conversation.
- I'm not ready to make any changes to lower my blood pressure at this time.

Lower your blood pressure now.

Lower your blood pressure for life.



Remember who you're saving your life for!

Test your knowledge

Facts about blood pressure

Do you know what blood pressure is?

Yes No Not Sure



- Blood pressure is the force that moves blood through the arteries.
- Your blood pressure includes two numbers. The first measures pressure when the heart beats (systolic) and the second when it is at rest (diastolic).
- A blood pressure of 120 / 80 is read as “120 over 80.”

Do you know what normal blood pressure is?

Yes No Not Sure



- A healthy blood pressure is below 120 / 80.

Do you know what high blood pressure is?

Yes No Not Sure



- High blood pressure is when the first number is 140 or higher, or when the second number is 90 or higher.
- If you have high blood pressure, the first number, the second number, or **both** numbers may be high.

Do you know that you can feel perfectly fine and still have high blood pressure?

Yes No Not Sure



- When blood pressure is high, the heart has to work harder and can become strained.
- People with high blood pressure have a higher chance of having a heart attack or a stroke.
- Your chance is even higher if you are overweight, use tobacco, or have high cholesterol or diabetes.
- High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer” because people frequently do not have symptoms.
- You may have high blood pressure even if you don’t have headaches or nervousness.

Do you know what your blood pressure is?

Yes No Not Sure



- Ask your doctor or nurse to check your blood pressure.
- Write your blood pressure down here and keep track of it over time.
_____ / _____

Tips to lower your blood pressure

Aim for a healthy weight.

- Many people with high blood pressure are overweight.
- Losing weight will decrease the strain on your heart.
- Losing as little as 7-10 pounds can be as effective as taking blood pressure medicine.

- Make gradual changes that you can live with.
- Lose the pounds slowly (1 or 2 pounds per week) until you reach your goal weight.
- Eat healthy meals at home instead of eating out, and reach for a healthy, low-fat snack when you are hungry.

Follow a healthy eating plan.

- A healthy diet will help to lower your blood pressure.

- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and beans every day, and fewer foods that are high in animal fat (meat, butter, cheese, processed foods).
- Use herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Use vegetable oils like canola for cooking instead of butter or lard.

Get active and stick with it.

- Being physically active decreases your risk of heart attack and stroke, and helps to prevent weight gain.
- Physical activity can be fun and give you energy.

- Start by getting 10 minutes of activity daily, and work up to 30 minutes of activity (like brisk walking) every day.
- Find a friend and make a plan to be active together.

Avoid tobacco use and secondhand smoke.

- Tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

- If you use tobacco, talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.
- Call the NC Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for help with quitting. The NC Quitline is available every day from 8:00 a.m. until midnight, with services offered in English and Spanish.

Limit alcohol use.

- Heavy and regular use of alcohol can significantly increase your blood pressure.
- A drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1 ounce of 100 proof whiskey.

- If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to no more than 1 drink per day if you are a woman and no more than 2 drinks per day if you are a man.

Try to lower the stress in your life.

- Some people use tobacco or alcohol or overeat when they are under stress.

- Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, and food to deal with your stress. Find support from friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers instead.
- Try exercising when you feel stressed.