

High Blood Pressure Facts

- The medical term for high blood pressure is hypertension.
- About 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. have high blood pressure.
- High blood pressure is referred to as the silent killer because one can have it for years without knowing it, as the condition itself has no symptoms.
- Having high blood pressure increases one's risk of heart disease (the leading cause of death in America) and stroke (third leading cause of death).
- High blood pressure is dangerous because it makes the heart work harder. This extra stress on the heart contributes to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).



High Blood Pressure

*Walker County
Healthy Initiatives.*

What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure is a serious condition that can lead to coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, and other health problems.

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries as the heart pumps blood. High blood pressure is caused when blood pressure stays elevated over time.

Risk Factors for Developing High Blood Pressure

- Family history
- Growing older
- Gender
- Lack of physical activity
- Poor diet, especially one that contains too much salt
- Overweight and obesity
- Consuming too much alcohol

Measuring Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is measured as systolic and diastolic pressures. “Systolic” (the top number) refers to blood pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood. “Diastolic” (the bottom number) refers to blood pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.

Healthy	Below 120/80
Pre-hypertension	120/80 to 139/89
High blood pressure	
Stage 1 hypertension	140/90 to 159/99
Stage 2 hypertension	160/100 or greater

NOTE: If you have diabetes or chronic kidney disease, high blood pressure is defined as 130/80 mmHg (millimeters of mercury) or higher.

Knowing your blood pressure numbers is important, even when you are feeling fine.

Managing High Blood Pressure

1. **Maintain a healthy weight**
 - excess weight increases the strain on the heart
 - losing as little as 10 lbs. can help lower blood pressure
2. **Be physically active**
 - exercise at least 30 minutes daily
3. **Follow a healthy eating plan**
 - eat a low fat diet
 - add more fruits and vegetables to your diet
4. **Reduce your sodium intake**
 - 1,500 mg per day
5. **Drink alcohol in moderation**
 - 1 drink a day for women
 - 2 drinks a day for men
6. **Avoid tobacco**
7. **Take prescribed medications as directed**

