

6 CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO LIVE WELL WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Did you know there is a healthy way to have a disease? Even when you have a chronic condition, like high blood pressure, there are many things you can do to live a healthy, satisfying life. Making small changes to your daily habits can help you take care of your health, do what you enjoy, and get the most out of life.

Below are 6 key changes that can help you live well with high blood pressure. Make sure to discuss any changes you are thinking about making with your health care provider.

1. Eat Well

What it means:

- Eat less salt
- Limit caffeine
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Follow the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan. For more information about the DASH diet, go to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's website at: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/healthtopics/dash-eating-plan>

Why it matters:

Eating well can help you:

- Control your blood pressure
- Manage your weight
- Prevent or manage other health problems, such as diabetes

2. Be Active

What it means:

- Make activity part of your daily routine
- Work up to 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week (at least 150 minutes per week)
- Walking is a great place to start

Why it matters:

Being active can help you:

- Lower your blood pressure
- Need less medicine for your blood pressure (always check with your medical doctor before making any changes to your medicines)
- Feel less stressed and in a better mood
- Have more fun in your life



3. Manage your weight

What it means:

- Choose healthy foods
- Be active every day
- Know what weight is healthy for you
- Have a plan to get to or stay at your healthy weight
- Manage stress
- Get support if you need it

Why it matters:

Managing your weight can:

- Lower your blood pressure
- Help your blood pressure medicine work better
- Help you have more energy

4. Know what triggers your blood pressure to go up and down

What it means:

- Know how emotions and stress can raise your blood pressure
- Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol and caffeine
- Stick with your healthy eating and exercise plan
- Follow your doctor's instructions when taking your medicine

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking over-the-counter medicines or dietary supplements

Why it matters:

Knowing what affects your blood pressure can help you:

- Avoid triggers that make your blood pressure go high or low
- Change unhealthy habits that affect your blood pressure
- Keep your blood pressure in a normal range

5. Manage stress in healthy ways

What it means:

- Practice and use healthy stress management skills
- Change or avoid stressful situations when you can
- Fill your life with people, hobbies, and activities you enjoy

Why it matters:

Managing stress can help you:

- Keep your blood pressure from going up
- Stick with your healthy habits
- Take care of yourself and your health

6. Be an active member of your health care team

What it means:

- Take time to learn about high blood pressure. For more information about high blood

pressure, go to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's website at: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hbp>

- Know what to do to take care of yourself and your high blood pressure
- Change your habits when they are not helping you to be healthy
- Take part in health decisions with your doctor and other members of your health care team
- Become confident that you can do what you need to do to live well
- Ask your health care practitioner if there are any tests, referrals, or treatments that might be helpful to use along with your current treatment plan

Why it matters:

Taking an active role in your health can help you:

- Take charge of your health and your life
- Get the most out of your health care
- Live better and feel better
- Become more confident
- Become motivated to make changes