

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood Pressure is a measure of the force of the blood against the walls of your arteries. Blood pressure is measured in two numbers. The top or larger number (systolic) measures the force of the blood flow in your arteries when your heart beats. The bottom or smaller number (diastolic) represents the pressure when your heart is at rest. High blood pressure causes an increased strain on your heart and blood vessels and can increase the risk for heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Many people have high blood pressure and are unaware of it because they may not feel any discomfort. The only way to know if your blood pressure is high is to have it checked.

For people with diabetes the goal is to keep the systolic pressure less than 130 and the diastolic pressure less than 80. In other words, a blood pressure reading would look like this: 130/80. If you have high blood pressure there is a lot that can be done to lower it. Proper treatment can reduce the risk of heart disease and other complications.

Things that you can do to help lower your blood pressure:

- Work with your doctor to determine the best treatment for you.
- Losing as little as 10 pounds can make a difference in lowering blood pressure.
- Eat a healthy diet that is low in saturated and trans fats and also low in salt (sodium).
- Be more physically active. Try walking 30 minutes a day at least 5 times a week.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Take medication prescribed for blood pressure on a regular basis and carry a list of medications with you.
- Know what your blood pressure is and what it should be. Have your blood pressure checked at each doctor's visit and keep a written record.

For additional information please contact:

The American Heart Association
National Center:
7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231-4596
Phone: (800) 242-8721
www.americanheart.org

American Diabetes Association
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Alexandria, VA 22311
Phone: (800) 343-2383
www.diabetes.org

Source: American Diabetes Association

HEALTHY INITIATIVES

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