



MAY: NATIONAL HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EDUCATION MONTH



An estimated 50 million Americans have high blood pressure. Elevated blood pressure increases the risk for heart attacks, stroke, kidney damage, blindness and dementia. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute has issued new recommendations for what is considered a “normal” blood pressure: **below 120/80**. Any readings from 120/80 to 140/90 are considered “**prehypertensive**”. The risk for heart disease begins to rise once blood pressure creeps above 115/75. This doesn’t mean that an individual needs to take medication, but individuals with “prehypertension” should lose weight, start and maintain a regular exercise program, and limit their salt and alcohol intake. **OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:** monitor your blood pressure often, take your medication as prescribed and make wiser lifestyle choices!

If your blood pressure is high, here’s how much lifestyle changes should lower it. So far, studies have found that taking calcium, fish oil, or herbal supplements has little or no effect on blood pressure.

Advice	Details	Drop in Systolic Blood Pressure
Lose excess weight	For every 20 pounds you lose	5 to 20 points
Follow a DASH diet	Eat a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and low fat dairy foods	8 to 14 points
Exercise daily	Get 30 minutes a day of aerobic activity (like brisk walking)	4 to 9 points
Limit sodium	Eat no more than 2, 400 mg a day (1,500mg is better)	2 to 8 points
Limit alcohol	Have no more than 2 drinks a day for men 1 drink a day for women	2 to 4 points

Source: *The Seventh Report of the National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Treatment of High Blood Pressure* (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/hypertension.)



The Medical
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