

# Hope & Healing

## High Blood Pressure

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

### Introduction \_\_\_\_\_

Millions of people walk around with their high blood pressure too high because they don't know that it's high. High blood pressure is a silent problem. Suddenly a stroke or a heart attack strikes. The problem is not silent any longer. Blood, under pressure from the heart, supplies oxygen and nourishment and removes the waste of every cell in the body. Our blood pressure is lowest early in the day and throughout the day changes from moment to moment depending on what we are doing and how we feel emotionally.

### The Readings and Meanings of Blood Pressure \_\_\_\_\_

Blood pressure is highest when the heart beats (systolic pressure). It is lowest when the heart is resting between beats (diastolic pressure). The pressure is measured both times. The higher pressure is written over the lower pressure, such as 120/80 and pronounced 120 over 80.

Generally, the younger you are the lower your blood pressure should be. For people under 18 a reading of 130/80 could be too high. For those under 65 it should be 130/80 or lower. For people over 65, slightly higher pressures are common. One high reading is no cause for alarm as blood pressure readings change according to your activity and emotions. But your chances of developing high blood pressure are greater if you fit into one of the following groups:

1. It runs in your family.
2. You're older.

3. You're overweight.
4. You eat too much salt.
5. You drink too much alcohol.
6. You're black.
7. You take birth control pills.

### If Your Blood Pressure is High \_\_\_\_

You will need to know:

- How to cut salt from your diet.
- How to lose weight if you're overweight.
- How to quit smoking, if you smoke.
- How to begin an exercise program, if you are not already involved in a program.

Your doctor will usually allow time for non-drug measures to bring down your pressure unless it is dangerously high. The following measures should become routine for everyone with high blood pressure.

### 12 Tips for Lowering Blood Pressure Without Drugs \_\_\_\_\_

- **Order the fish.** Eat salmon, tuna, or mackerel about three times a week. The oil in the fish can help lower your pressure.
- **Head for the produce market.** Boost fiber intake by eating 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. A serving is a medium sized apple, banana, or orange, ½ cup of chopped or cooked vegetables or 1 cup of leafy vegetables. Add beans, breads, and cereals to round out the body's need for fiber. This way of eating helps lower your blood pressure, reduces your weight, drops your cholesterol, and prevents

constipation.

- **Shed the spare tire.** Taking inches off at your belt line can cause a dramatic drop in your blood pressure
- **Run, walk, bike, swim.** Regular exercise prevents high blood pressure as well as helps to bring it down.
- **Get more Vitamin C and Potassium.** Eat more oranges, grapefruits, green peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, strawberries, and cantaloupes to boost Vitamin C. For potassium: eat a baked potato, a banana, lima beans, apricots, chicken breasts, and citrus fruits.
- **Bone up on calcium.** Try for at least 800 milligrams a day. (About 3 cups of skim milk.)
- **Don't let the job kill you.** Learn how to relax. Take a walk during lunch. Break for day dreaming during the day.
- **Stay cool at home.** Create a private place to unwind with music and relaxation techniques.
- **Cut back on salt.** Use herbs, lemon juice, and salt substitute to flavor food.

- **Cut the alcohol.** Alcohol pushes blood pressures up. More than two drinks a day is too many.
- **If you smoke, quit.** Cigarette smoke hardens arteries and sets you up for a stroke or heart attack.
- **Watch the caffeine.** Caffeine also pushes up blood pressure. Keep your caffeine drinks down to 2-3 daily.

## Two Tips About the Use of Drugs to Control Blood Pressure \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Never, ever stop taking blood pressure medicine unless your doctor instructs you.** High blood pressure is controlled, not cured. Remember this, if nothing else: if you lay your medicines aside, you may be laying your health or your life aside.

**2. Your treatment is special for you.** What works for one person may not work for another. The key to successful drug treatment is for your doctor to choose the drug most likely to work for you and then to fine-tune the dose.

Today, we have so many drugs to control high blood pressure that a treatment schedule can be found for most everyone. Learn about your drugs, their side effects, the dosages, and the time of day to take them. Don't stop taking your medicines unless told to do so. During your visits, report your observations, ask questions, and if you have a blood pressure unit at home, bring in your readings.

## Tips About Taking Your Blood Pressure At Home \_\_\_\_\_

The blood pressure of some patients will rise when they visit their doctor. Taking blood pressures at home can benefit you and your doctor.

## Guidelines For Measuring Blood Pressure at Home

- Make arrangements with your doctor

to have one of his or her staff teach you to measure your pressure.

- Before taking your pressure, relax for 10 minutes. And do the measurement near the same time each day so that you can compare the readings. One high reading is no cause for alarm, but consult your doctor if you get high readings time after time.
- Do not measure blood pressure within 30 minutes of smoking a cigarette, or drinking a drink containing caffeine.

## Choosing the Right Equipment

The electronic-digital unit is the best unit to use at home but you will need to compare the readings with a mercury unit for accuracy. If you buy your unit from a medical supply house, they can check it against the mercury unit.

**Note:** Make certain the cuff is the right size. If it is too tight or too loose, you won't get accurate readings. For larger arms, you will need a wider cuff.

## Summary \_\_\_\_\_

Blood pressure is easily measured. The diagnosis of high blood pressure is straightforward. There can be no argument with the idea that high blood pressure needs attention. We now have many drugs to control high blood pressure. Yet, there are thousands of people who allow this problem to silently damage their arteries until they are in danger of having a stroke or a heart attack.

Become aware of what you must do and of what your doctor can help you do. Then, just do it. Try the dozen tips for lowering blood pressure without drugs and if drugs are required, don't ever quit taking them unless your doctor tells you to.

## Awaken the Miracles Within You

### The Miracle of the Strengths Within You

Tim Gallway has a workshop called the "Inner Game of Tennis." He takes clumsy players and tells them, "You are a tennis superstar. People have paid lots of money to see you play. Please give a demonstration."

The players now dance about the court skillfully smashing difficult shots with precision and finesse.

The astonished onlookers cheer with wild applause. Through this pretense of skill, the players release ability that was trapped under layers of "I can't." Your strengths lie within you. The problem is not that you are weak, but that you do not believe you are strong.

*The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.*