

Understanding Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)

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Did you know that an estimated 1 in 3 American adults have hypertension, more commonly referred to as high blood pressure (HBP)?

We at ProAct care about your health and want you to start making the first steps toward managing your blood pressure. We know how important a topic high blood pressure is, as studies have shown that elevated blood pressure for prolonged periods of time places you at greater risk for Stroke, Heart Attack, Heart Failure, Kidney disease, Eye damage, and damage to numerous other organs.

Quick Facts:

Blood pressure is a measurement that can be taken to show how much pressure is put on your veins and arteries. Your blood pressure is a combination of two numbers, your systolic pressure (top number) which is the pressure when the heart beats, and your diastolic pressure (bottom number) which is the pressure when your heart relaxes. High Blood Pressure (HBP) or Hypertension is the elevation of these pressures leading to increased stress on your veins, arteries, and bodily organs.

Unless otherwise discussed with your physician, the recommended treatment goal is a BP <140/90, unless you have also been diagnosed with diabetes and/or kidney disease where the target goal is <130/80.

Stage	Systolic	Diastolic
Normal	< 120	< 80
Pre-Hypertension	120-139	80-89
Hypertension		
Stage I	140-159	90-99
Stage II	≥ 160	≥ 100

This table can be used as a reference guide in staging your blood pressure. Remember that the Systolic pressure is the top number while the diastolic is the bottom number. Only a licensed medical professional can diagnose you with high blood pressure. Please talk to your physician or pharmacist prior to starting any therapy to treat your blood pressure.

Treatment:

Treatment of hypertension should start with and always include lifestyle modifications. Depending on the severity of your hypertension and other clinical criteria, drug therapy may be initiated at the same time as lifestyle modifications. Combining lifestyle modification with your drug therapy will increase the efficacy of your therapy, and could potentially decrease the need for additional, or even any medication.

Lifestyle Modifications:

Lifestyle modifications are focused around three main concepts: Diet, Exercise, and Weight loss

Diet:

While there are many diets that may be helpful in reducing your blood pressure, most diets focus around a reduction in dietary sodium intake. The recommended daily sodium intake is less than 2.4 grams/day and even as low as 1.5grams/day based on some guidelines.

DASH Diet: Foods rich in potassium such as fruits and vegetables. Low fat dairy products rich in Calcium, decreased intake of saturated/total fat, and increased fiber intake. The DASH diet has been shown to be effective in decreasing systolic blood pressure (SBP) by 8-14mmHg on average.

Exercise:

Moderate exercise for 30 minutes a day for 5-6 days a week can decrease SBP by 4-9mmHg on average.

Weight Loss:

Reducing, and maintaining body weight in normal range with a BMI of <25kg/m² may reduce you SBP by as much as 20mmHg.

Drug Therapy

Drug therapy will differ from patient to patient. Current recommendations on first line therapy include the use of: diuretics, beta-blockers, alpha/beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, ACE inhibitors, and Angiotension receptor blockers (ARBs).

While not all drugs have a true generic, most of the above listed class have excellent generic alternatives within the class. Please consult your physician or pharmacist to determine which first line therapy may be most appropriate for you, and to see if you would benefit from generic substitution.

Most medications take 1-2 weeks to become effective, and may take up to 4 weeks for maximum benefit. It is important to remember that immediate results are not nearly as important as long term success, so be patient and stick with your treatment plan.



Quick Tips to Lower your Blood Pressure:

- Lose Excess Weight
- Quitting Smoking
- Decreasing Salt Intake
- Decreasing Alcohol Intake
- What to Avoid?
 - Processed foods such as deli meat, snacks, and canned foods
- What to Eat?
 - Low Fat/Low Sodium
 - Less than 30% calories from fat
 - 7-10% of fat calories from saturated fat
 - Foods Rich in Potassium and Calcium

Self Monitoring

When selecting a home blood pressure monitor, it is important to find a machine that you are comfortable operating, with a cuff that correctly fits your arm. The cuff should fit on your upper arm with enough room to slide one finger under the cuff, and a one inch gap between the bottom of the cuff and your elbow.

While there are many types of home blood pressure machines, newer methods of monitoring such as wrist or fingertip monitors are typically less accurate than traditional upper arm methods, and should not be relied on for routine use.

It is important to avoid all external distractions as they can affect your blood pressure during monitoring. You should first remove any barrier between your skin and the monitor such as clothing or jewelry. It is recommended that you sit for five minutes with your feet flat on the floor prior to monitoring, and avoid talking during your reading. It is best to repeat readings after 2-3 minutes and average the readings.

Remember to calibrate your home machine at your physician's office at least once a year.



Whether or not drug therapy is needed, Lifestyle modifications should always be included in the treatment plan!

New Product Update!

Recent New Drug Approvals:

- SAVELLA™ (Oral Dosage form to treat pain associated with Fibromyalgia)

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In the Next Issue:

Understanding Dyslipidemia (High Cholesterol)

Contact Us!

While it is important to keep open lines of communication with your physician and local pharmacist regarding your prescriptions, we understand that the amount of information received can sometimes be overwhelming.

We would like to remind you that our clinical department is here to help! We want to see our members taking the right medication at the right cost. While not all medications have a true generic, there are often therapeutic alternatives available that could provide the same benefit, while costing you less.

Please feel free to contact our clinical department at any time for questions regarding your prescriptions, or for cost saving alternatives.

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