

Healthy Blood Pressure: Eating to Lower Your Risk

What Is High Blood Pressure?

- High blood pressure is also called hypertension.
- It happens when your heart is pushing your blood too hard against blood vessels which can lead to damage.

Who Is At Risk?

- Pregnant women
- Adults aged 50 and older
- Obese individuals.
- Individuals with diabetes.
- People with a family history of high blood pressure.
- African Americans and Hispanics
- People who smoke, drink heavily, eat a lot of salty foods, or if you don't get enough exercise.

Source: American Heart Association. What Is High Blood Pressure? heart.org

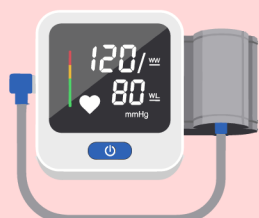
It's Known As The Silent Killer!

- High blood pressure can damage your brain, eyes, heart, and kidneys quietly over time with no symptoms.
- Think of blowing up a balloon - if you blow the balloon up too hard and too fast, the balloon can pop!



Systolic **Diastolic** = Your Blood Pressure

- Systolic - how hard your blood pushes against your blood vessels when your heart beats. This is the top number.
- Diastolic: how hard your blood pushes against your blood vessels when your heart rests between beats. This is the bottom number.
- Refer to a blood pressure chart to see if your numbers are normal or high.



**Talk to your
healthcare provider
if your numbers are
elevated or high.**

Blood Pressure Readings

<u>Category</u>	<u>Top / Bottom Number</u>
Normal	Below 120 / Below 80
Elevated	120 - 129 / Below 80
High Blood Pressure Stage 1	130 - 139 / 80 - 89
High Blood Pressure Stage 2	Above 140 / Above 90
Emergency Call 911	Above 140 / Above 90

Source: American Heart Association. Understanding Blood Pressure Readings. heart.org

Healthy Blood Pressure: Eating to Lower Your Risk



Your Food Choices Can Make A Big Difference In Your Blood Pressure

Focus on eating:

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Beans, nuts, legumes
- Lean proteins (chicken, fish)
- DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) meal patterns
- Mediterranean-style meal patterns

Reduce:

- Foods high in sodium or added salt like fast food, frozen foods, salty snacks, canned foods, and deli/cured meats
- Foods high in saturated fats like fried foods, fatty cuts of beef or pork, processed meats, butter, or lard.
- Foods or drinks high in added sugar like soda, sweet tea, fruit drinks, pastries, and desserts.

To help reduce your salt intake at home, try looking for “salt-free” or “no sodium added” store mixes. You can also make your own at home.

- Taco Seasoning - Chili powder, paprika oregano, cumin, black pepper
- Italian - Oregano, marjoram, basil, thyme, sage
- Cajun - Chili powder, black pepper, garlic, thyme, paprika, cayenne, oregano

Eating the DASH Way

These trusted websites provide easy tips, recipes, and meal ideas for following the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan.

- American Heart Association - heart.org
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute - nhlbi.nih.gov
- US Dept. of Health & Human Services - health.gov

Healthy Choices Start Here

Knowing your risks, checking your numbers, and choosing heart-healthy foods can help protect your health.

Talk to your healthcare provider for a personalized plan.



Need More Help? Email health@feedingthegulfcoast.org or scan the QR code for more information.