

Lower Your Blood Pressure

To Lower Your Blood Pressure

Those items marked with an “X” would most benefit you based on the results of your health screening. Those items marked with a “?” weren’t determined at your screening.

- [] **Exercise regularly** – Be active at least 30 minutes on most or all days of the week.
- [X] **Maintain a healthy weight** – The most effective way to lose weight is through a combination of regular exercise, reducing portion sizes, and reducing your intake of fat, sweets, and white flour products such as bread, pastries, and pasta.
- [?] **Limit salt intake** – Restrict salt intake to 6000 mg of salt/2400 mg of sodium per day (1 teaspoon salt). Examples of high salt foods include canned soups, cheeses, and most prepared meals or foods. Try Nu-Salt® (available at Shaw’s supermarkets) instead.
- [?] **Follow the DASH diet** - The DASH diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy foods. It is also low in sweets and saturated and total fat. It can be very effective at lowering your blood pressure. The basics of the DASH diet are as follows:
 - [X] • Increase the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat to 8 servings per day.
 - [X] • Select whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread or pasta and brown rice to get more fiber and added nutrients
 - [?] • Choose lowfat or nonfat dairy products
 - [] • Satisfy your sweet tooth with fresh, frozen or dried fruit
 - [?] • Enjoy a serving of nuts, seeds, or legumes (beans) every day
- [X] **Reduce sweets and white flour products** – This can lower your blood pressure and total cholesterol, raise your HDL cholesterol and energy levels, and promote weight loss. Alternatives include fresh, frozen, or dried fruit, whole wheat or whole grain products, and beans.
- [] **Quit smoking** – Smoking lowers your HDL cholesterol and raises your risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer, high blood pressure, blood clots, emphysema, erectile dysfunction, and other diseases.
- [] **Reduce alcohol intake** – Moderate alcohol intake lowers your risk of heart attack and stroke. However, more than 2 drinks per day for men and more than 1 drink per day for women can raise your blood pressure and your risk of liver disease, and lower HDL (good) cholesterol.
- [?] **Decrease caffeine intake** – In addition to raising your blood pressure, caffeine may also increase your risk of osteoporosis and make you more tired in the long run. Caffeine is found in coffee, black tea, chocolate, and many sodas.
- [] **Lower stress** – The best ways to lower stress are to exercise regularly, eat healthy, and get adequate sleep. For free, confidential help with managing your stress, call your Employee Assistance Program at (800) 854-1446.