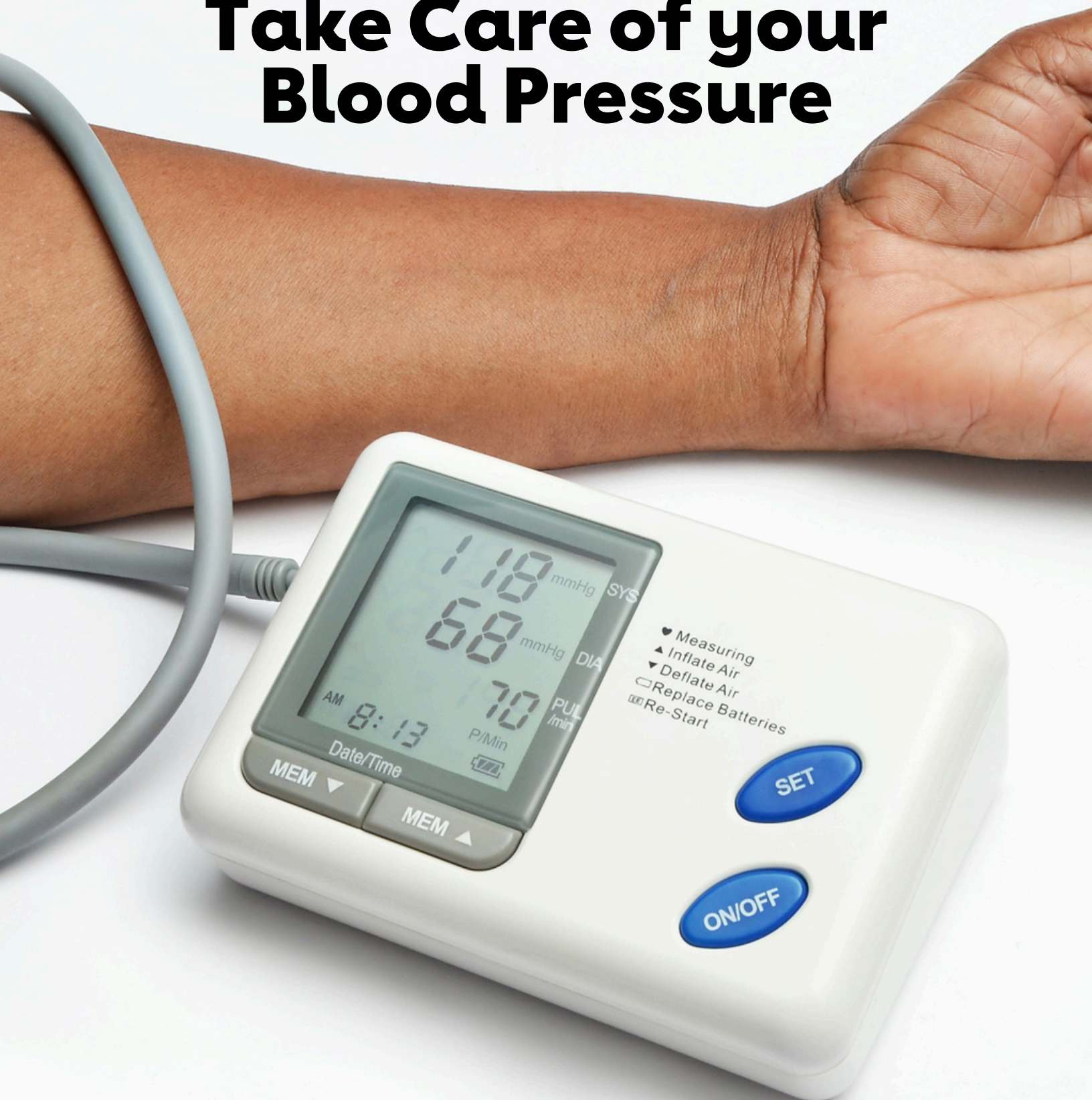




American
Heart
Association.

Take Care of your Blood Pressure



A NOTE TO THE READER



Greetings!

High blood pressure is also known as hypertension. It happens when the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels is too high. At the American Heart Association, we know managing high blood pressure is an important part of preventing heart disease and stroke.

Nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure and many don't even know they have it. The only way to know you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked. A diagnosis of high blood pressure will need to be made by a health care professional.

The American Heart Association is working with communities to provide materials that will help you learn how to control your blood pressure at home. With the materials provided, you will learn strategies to measure and manage your blood pressure at home.

In this booklet you will find a variety of resources including:

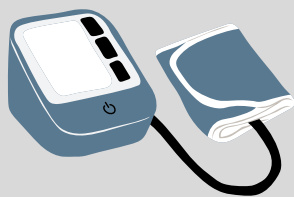
- Diagrams on how to check your blood pressure accurately
- Logs to keep track of your blood pressure readings
- Questions to talk to your health care professional about your blood pressure control
- Tips to manage stress and improve your nutrition

One of the most important parts about controlling your blood pressure is making sure you keep track of your blood pressure readings and communicate with your health care team. We strongly encourage you to communicate regularly with a primary care health care professional to control your blood pressure and take the necessary steps towards a healthier life.

HOW TO MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

UNDERSTAND READINGS

The first step to managing blood pressure is understanding what the numbers mean and what is considered normal, elevated, severe, and hypertensive emergency.



blood pressure
is typically
recorded as 2
numbers

117
—
76

Systolic

The top number, the higher of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats

Diastolic

The bottom number, the lower of the two numbers, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is resting between heart beats.

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDED OFFICE BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORIES

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120–129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130–139	or	80–89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

*symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking

HOW TO MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

HOW TO GET AN ACCURATE BLOOD PRESSURE READING

1 Prepare

- Avoid caffeine, tobacco and exercise for at least 30 minutes before measurement
- Empty bladder if full
- Take measurements before your BP medication



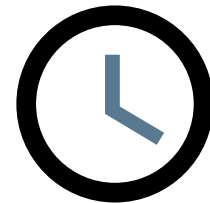
2 Sit Correctly

- Back supported
- Feet flat on the floor or a firm surface
- Legs not crossed
- Cuff placed on bare upper arm
- Arm supported with middle of the cuff at heart level



3 Measure BP using device in the AM & PM

- Rest quietly for 5 minutes
- Take 2 measurements 1 minute apart
- Avoid conversations and using electronic devices
- Perform this process in the morning and evening



4 Record blood pressure readings in your log



Scan to
learn more

My Blood Pressure Log

Name: _____

Blood Pressure Goal: _____

Instructions:

- Try to check your blood pressure twice a day for at least 3 days and up to 7 consecutive days before an appointment with a health care professional.
- For best results, sit comfortably with both feet on the floor for at least five minutes before taking a measurement.
- When you measure your blood pressure, rest your arm on a table so the blood pressure cuff is at about the same height as your heart.
- Record your blood pressure on this sheet and show it to your health care professional at every visit.

Date	Blood Pressure Reading
Day 1: AM	
Day 1: PM	
Day 2: AM	
Day 2: PM	
Day 3: AM	
Day 3: PM	
Day 4: AM	
Day 4: PM	

Date	Blood Pressure Reading
Day 5: AM	
Day 5: PM	
Day 6: AM	
Day 6: PM	
Day 7: AM	
Day 7 PM	
Day 8 AM	
Day 8 PM	

My Blood Pressure Log

Name: _____

Blood Pressure Goal: _____

Instructions:

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Day 1: PM	
Day 2: AM	
Day 2: PM	
Day 3: AM	
Day 3: PM	
Day 4: AM	
Day 4: PM	

Date	Blood Pressure Reading
Day 5: AM	
Day 5: PM	
Day 6: AM	
Day 6: PM	
Day 7: AM	
Day 7 PM	
Day 8 AM	
Day 8 PM	

PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Getting Ready

Are you taking your medications as prescribed?

- Yes
- Usually
- Sometimes
- No

How often do you check your blood pressure?

- Every day
- About once a week
- About once a month
- Rarely
- Never

If you measure your blood pressure, do you keep a log?

- Yes
- No

Overcoming Challenges

It's hard for me to manage my blood pressure because (choose all that apply):

- I don't like the way the medication makes me feel
- I'm having trouble getting my medication
- I'm having trouble changing my diet
- I can't easily exercise
- It's expensive
- I'm stressed/I don't feel well
- I forget what I need to do

During my appointment, I'd like to discuss (choose all that apply):

- My medications
- Checking my blood pressure at home
- Reducing salt in my diet
- Getting more exercise
- Managing my weight
- Quitting smoking

To get less salt in my diet, I'd like to (choose all that apply):

- Buy low sodium foods
- Taste before adding salt
- Use salt-free spices/herbs
- Check labels for sodium
- Cook at home more often



Planning for Success

During your appointment, refer to this guide and have ready:

- A complete list of all your medications
- A pen and paper to take notes

HEART HEALTHY LIVING

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



EAT SMART

Eat a healthy diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins, lean animal proteins and fish. Limit sodium, saturated fats and added sugars. Limit sugary foods and drinks, fatty or processed meats, salty foods, refined carbohydrates and highly processed foods. heart.org/eatsmart



MOVE MORE

Physical activity helps control blood pressure, weight and stress levels. heart.org/movemore



MANAGE WEIGHT

If you're overweight, even a 5% weight loss can reduce high blood pressure. heart.org/weight



DON'T SMOKE

Every time you smoke, vape or use tobacco, the nicotine can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure. heart.org/tobacco



SLEEP WELL

Short sleep (less than 7 hours) and poor-quality sleep are associated with high blood pressure.

Visit heart.org/healthyforgood for more healthy tips

HOW TO MANAGE STRESS

What is stress?

Stress is your body's response to change. Your body reacts to it by releasing adrenaline (a hormone) that can cause your breathing and heart rate to speed up, and your blood pressure to rise. These reactions help you deal with the situation. The cause of high blood pressure is a combination of genetics, lifestyle choices, and chronic stress.

What can I do about stress?

Fortunately, you can manage stress by:

- Exercising regularly. It can relieve stress, tension, anxiety, and depression. Consider a nature walk, aerobic exercise, resistance training, or yoga.
- Making time for friends and family. It's important to maintain social connections and talk with people you trust.
- Getting enough sleep. Adults should aim for seven to nine hours a night.
- Maintaining a positive attitude. Keep a gratitude journal and write weekly entries.
- Practicing relaxation techniques, such as meditating or listening to music.
- Finding a stimulating hobby. A hobby you enjoy can keep you engaged so you don't dwell on negative thoughts or worries. You might want to try cooking or knitting.

Scan to learn more:



HOW TO FOLLOW A HEALTHY DIET PATTERN

The **American Heart Association** recommends a healthy eating pattern that emphasizes vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

Vegetables

Eat a variety of colors and types, especially deeply colored vegetables, such as spinach, carrots and broccoli. **Examples of a portion per serving are:**



2 cups raw leafy greens



1 cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables



1 cup 100% vegetable juice (no salt added).

Fruits:

Unsweetened fruits are best. Eat a variety of colors and types, especially deeply colored fruits, such as peaches and berries. **Examples of a portion serving are:**



1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball)



1/4 cup of unsweetened dried fruit



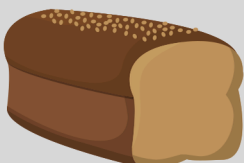
1/2 cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit



1/2 cup 100% fruit juice

Whole Grains :

At least half of your servings should be high-fiber whole grains. Select items like whole-wheat bread, wholegrain crackers and brown rice. **Examples of a portion per serving are:**



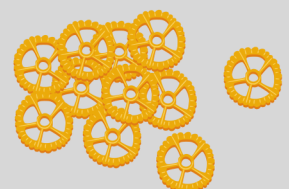
1 slice of bread



1/2 cup of hot cereal



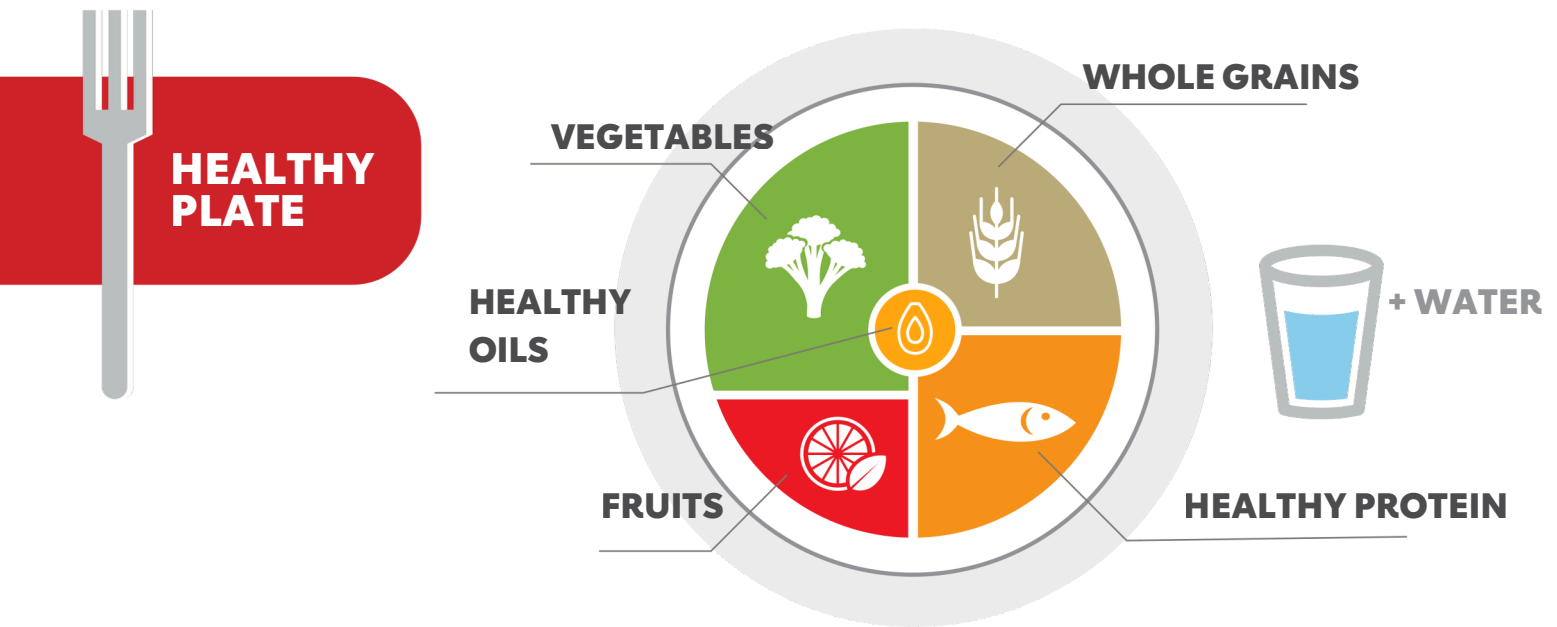
1 cup cereal flakes



1/2 cup cooked rice or pasta

HOW TO FOLLOW A HEALTHY DIET PATTERN

The **American Heart Association** recommends a healthy eating pattern that emphasizes vegetables, fruits and whole grains. It is recommended to get 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables per day.



ENJOY

vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts, plant-based proteins (like beans, lentils, nuts), lean animal proteins (like skinless poultry, fish, seafood, low-fat dairy). Drink plenty of water throughout the day, and unsweetened tea and coffee can also be enjoyed.

LIMIT

sweetened drinks and limit or eliminate alcohol. Eat less salty food, fatty foods, and processed meats. Limit foods like butter, whole milk, full-fat yogurt, and cheese. Take the skin off poultry before cooking. Use plant-based oils, such as olive, canola, or avocado oil, instead of oils like coconut or palm oil.

AVOID

trans fats. Trans fats are found in some store-bought baked goods and fried foods.

Learn how to read a nutrition facts label here:





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