

WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition where the force of blood against the artery walls is consistently too high. This can damage the blood vessels & organs, leading to serious health issues.

Hypertension is diagnosed when blood pressure consistently measures:

- **Systolic Pressure:** ≥ 140 mmHg
- **Diastolic Pressure:** ≥ 90 mmHg

WHY CARE ABOUT BLOOD PRESSURE?

If your blood pressure is not well controlled, it can pose serious health risks. High blood pressure increases your risk of:

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Eye problems
- Dementia
- Kidney failure
- Heart failure
- Erectile dysfunction

Each person has an individual target blood pressure. Reaching your goal blood pressure is achieved when both the top & bottom numbers are less than your goal.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

Regular blood pressure check-ups are essential, especially since most people cannot tell when their blood pressure is high.

Consider asking your care provider about your blood pressure especially if you:

- ♦ Have a family history of hypertension.
- ♦ Experience symptoms like severe headaches, shortness of breath, or chest pain.
- ♦ Notice changes in vision or experience dizziness & fatigue.

Early detection & management are crucial in preventing complications from hypertension.

In case of emergency, call 911

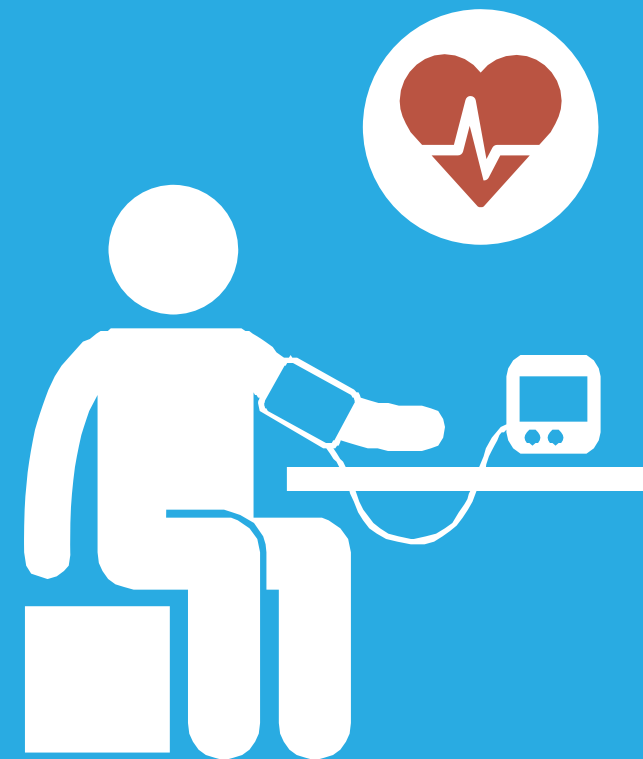
For more information visit
<https://hypertension.ca/>

For personalized guidance, consult your healthcare provider.

CONTACT US

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UNDERSTANDING BLOOD PRESSURE



WHAT IS BLOOD PRESSURE?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the blood vessels as the heart pumps it around the body. It is recorded as two numbers:

1. **Systolic Pressure:** The top number. Represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts
2. **Diastolic Pressure:** The bottom number. Shows the pressure in the arteries when the heart relaxed.

It is common for blood pressure readings to vary depending on time of day, & location.

When measuring your blood pressure it is best to take two readings, a couple minute apart, & calculate the average value.



WHAT CAUSES HYPERTENSION?

Some causes for high blood pressure can be managed, others are beyond your control.

Causes you cannot control:

- Age
- Family history (genetics)

Causes you can control:

- Obesity
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol
- Sleep apnea
- Unhealthy diet
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Diabetes
- Stress
- Health conditions

WAYS TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

Managing hypertension involves lifestyle changes & sometimes medication:

- The most effective lifestyle change is to lose/maintain a healthy weight
- Healthy Diet:
 - Reduce sodium intake & limit saturated fats
 - Be aware of hidden sources of salt & sugar
 - Follow the DASH diet
 - Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, & low-fat dairy
- Aim for ≥30 mins of moderate exercise most days
- Quit Smoking & limit Alcohol consumption
- Lifestyle changes may not be sufficient & if necessary, your care provider may prescribe medication. Multiple medications may be required. Medications should be taken as directed.

| Targets: | Systolic | Diastolic |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| For most people | Less than 140 mmHg | Less than 90 mmHg |
| People with diabetes | Less than 130 mmHg | Less than 90 mmHg |
| High risk for heart disease | Less than 120 mmHg | - |

Appendix B. Demographic questions posed to study participants

| Question Stem | Response Options |
|---|--|
| How old are you? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 to 24 years• 25 to 44 years• 45 to 64 years• 65 to 84 years• 85 years and over |
| What gender do you identify most with? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male• Female• Transgender Male• Transgender Female• Non-binary• Other |
| What is the estimated total income of your family? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under \$24,000 (including loss)• \$50,000 to \$74,000• \$75,000 to \$99,000• \$100,000 and over |
| What is the highest level of education you have achieved? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than secondary (high) school graduation• Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate• Some postsecondary education• Postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree |

Appendix C. HELM Questionnaire included in the pre- and post-test survey

| Question # Pre-Education | Question # Post-Education | Question Style | Question as Stated | Responses |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| 1 | 15 | True or False | A person is considered to have hypertension if either their systolic blood pressure is 140 or their diastolic is 90 or higher on two separate occasions. | 1) <u>True</u> 2) False |
| 2 | 16 | True or False | Most people can tell when their blood pressure is high because they feel bad | 1) True 2) <u>False</u> |
| 3 | 17 | Multiple Choice | Uncontrolled hypertension can lead to which of the following: | 1) Lung cancer 2) <u>Kidney Failure</u> 3) High cholesterol 4) Diabetes |
| 4 | 18 | Multiple Choice | Which of the following increases your risk of having hypertension? | 1) Weight lifting 2) Drinking >2 cups of coffee a day 3) Smoking a pack of cigarettes 4) <u>Gaining 15 pounds</u> |
| 5 | 19 | Multiple Choice | People with hypertension do not need to take medicine if they exercise regularly. | 1) True 2) <u>False</u> |
| 6 | 20 | Multiple Choice | Which of the following statements about taking blood pressure medicine is TRUE? | 1) Blood pressure medicine should always be taken with food 2) <u>More than one type of blood pressure medicine can be taken at the same time</u> 3) Blood pressure medicine works best if it is taken at bedtime 4) Blood pressure medicine should not be taken if a person drank alcohol that day |
| 7 | 21 | True or False | Most of the salt Americans eat is added with a salt shaker. | 1) True 2) <u>False</u> |
| 8 | 22 | True or False | There are about as many calories in 12 ounces of regular orange juice as there | 1) True 2) <u>False</u> |

| | | | | |
|----|----|-----------------|--|---|
| | | | are in 12 ounces of regular cola | |
| 9 | 23 | Multiple Choice | An overweight 60-year-old man has hypertension. He drinks one bottle of beer and 4 cups of regular coffee a day. He adds regular table salt to his food at most meals. Which one of the following changes is the most likely to lower his blood pressure? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>Lose 10 pounds</u> 2) Stop drinking alcohol 3) Switch to decaffeinated coffee 4) Switch to sea salt |
| 10 | 24 | Multiple Choice | Which one of the following changes to your diet is most likely to lower blood pressure? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products</u> 2) Eliminate spicy foods 3) Drink one glass of red wine daily 4) Drink herbal tea instead of coffee |
| 11 | 25 | Multiple Choice | Which one of the following statements about exercise and blood pressure is TRUE? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) People who are on their feet most of the day will not benefit from more exercise 2) <u>Exercising for 30 minutes every day lowers blood pressure more than exercising for 30 minutes, 3 days a week</u> 3) Weight lifting should be avoided by people with high blood pressure 4) When exercising, you must raise your heart beat to at least 100 beats a minute to improve blood pressure |
| 12 | 26 | Multiple Choice | A man reports that his blood pressure is 148/78 mm Hg when he checks it using the blood pressure machine in the pharmacy, 144/66 mm Hg in his family doctor's office, and 132/74 mm Hg when he checks it at home. Which of the following statements is TRUE? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <u>It is common for blood pressure readings to vary like this</u> 2) The highest blood pressure reading is the correct one 3) The lowest blood pressure reading is the correct one 4) He can be reassured that his blood pressure is normal |
| 13 | 27 | Multiple | When measuring your blood | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Always take your reading |

| | | | | |
|----|----|-----------------|---|--|
| | | Choice | pressure at home, you should: | <p>before you take your blood pressure medicine</p> <p>2) Take several readings, a minute or 2 apart, and record the lowest one</p> <p>3) Take your blood pressure right after exercising and at least 2 hours after a meal</p> <p>4) <u>Take two readings, a minute or 2 apart, and write down the average value</u></p> |
| 14 | 28 | Multiple Choice | Blood pressure is measured with two numbers, an upper and a lower number. It is usually written as upper/lower. If someone is told that their goal blood pressure is 126/76, when have they reached their goal? | <p>1) <u>When the upper is below 126 and the lower is below 76</u></p> <p>2) When the upper is below 126, even if the lower is over 76</p> <p>3) When the lower is below 76 even if the upper is over 126</p> <p>4) When the average of the upper and the lower is <100</p> |

Correct responses are bolded and underlined. The Hypertension Evaluation Lifestyle and Management (HELM) Questionnaire was developed by Schapira et al. (2012); the question order and vocabulary were preserved.