



# TAKE IT TO HEART.

Get your blood pressure checked.

Your blood pressure is a measure of the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. It becomes higher with the more blood your heart pumps and when your arteries narrow. This raises your risk of serious problems such as heart attack, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.<sup>1</sup> You might not know you have high blood pressure (also called hypertension) unless you get it checked.

## What increases your risk?<sup>2</sup>

Some risk factors for high blood pressure cannot be controlled, such as (older) age, race and family history. Some health conditions, including diabetes and obesity, are associated with high blood pressure. Lifestyle choices that involve a diet high in salt and low in potassium, physical inactivity, drinking too much alcohol, and tobacco use increase the risk for high blood pressure.<sup>2</sup>

## Measure your blood pressure.<sup>3</sup>

High blood pressure has no warning signs or symptoms, so regular monitoring is important. Learn the correct way to have your blood pressure taken whether you're getting it checked at the doctor's office or checking it yourself at home.<sup>3</sup> A normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg.<sup>1</sup>



## Tips for an accurate blood pressure reading.<sup>3</sup>

**Before the reading:** Do not eat or drink for 30 minutes, empty your bladder, and rest for a few minutes.

**During the reading:** Do not talk or cross your legs; also, make sure the cuff is the right size and placed on a bare arm at heart level.

**After the reading:** Discuss the results with your health care provider. If the reading is elevated, have it rechecked.



## Schedule your annual wellness exam.

A blood pressure check is covered at 100% under most health plans when received as part of your annual wellness check-up.<sup>4</sup>

To find an in-network primary care provider near you, search the directory on [myCigna.com](https://myCigna.com)<sup>®</sup> or call the number on your ID card, 24/7.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera and click on the link to go to [myCigna.com](https://myCigna.com).



## Take action and take control of your health.<sup>5</sup>

Healthy lifestyle choices can help improve your blood pressure and lower your risk of serious disease.

- › **Be active** – Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking or cycling, every week. That's 30 minutes a day, five days a week.<sup>5</sup>
- › **Maintain a healthy weight** – If you're overweight or obese, losing weight can help you control your blood pressure.
- › **Eat well** – Choose nutritious whole foods prepared at home instead of processed foods. Include fruits and vegetables rich in potassium.
- › **Get enough sleep** – This is part of keeping your heart and blood vessels healthy.
- › **Drink less alcohol** – If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation: no more than one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.
- › **Quit tobacco** – Talk with your doctor if you need help.
- › **Manage stress** – Take care of your health – body and mind.

If lifestyle changes aren't enough, your doctor may prescribe medications to help control your blood pressure.



1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "About High Blood Pressure." Page last reviewed May 18, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/about.htm>.

2. CDC. "Know Your Risk for High Blood Pressure." Page last reviewed February 24, 2020. [https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/risk\\_factors.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/risk_factors.htm).

3. CDC. "Measure Your Blood Pressure." Page last reviewed September 27, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/measure.htm>.

4. Plans may vary, so please see your plan documents for details of your plan's preventive care coverage.

5. CDC. "Prevent High Blood Pressure." Page last reviewed February 24, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/prevent.htm>.

This is general health information and not medical advice or services. Always consult with your doctor for appropriate examinations, treatment, testing, and health care recommendations.

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