

## Lifestyle changes you can make to help lower your blood pressure

Lifestyle change	Average reduction in blood pressure
<p><b>Maintain a normal body weight</b></p> <p>Two measures used to determine if you are overweight include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Your body mass index (BMI)</b> is an approximation of your total body fat determined by calculating your weight relative to your height. To calculate your BMI value, multiply your weight in pounds by 703, divide that result by your height in inches, then divide again by your height in inches. <p><b>BMI = (weight in lbs. x 703) ÷ height ÷ height</b></p> <p>A BMI calculator is available on the Healthy Blue Living member section of <b>Mi.BCN.com</b>.</p> <p>What the results of your BMI mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 18.5 to 24.9 is considered normal weight</li> <li>▪ 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight</li> <li>▪ 30 or greater is defined as obese</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2. The measurement around your waist at the navel.</b> Too much fat around the waistline (apple shape body) increases your risk for heart disease. Waist measurements that are too high: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 40 inches in men</li> <li>▪ 35 inches in women</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>A weight loss of 20 pounds or more can lower your systolic blood pressure (the top number) 5 to 20 mm/Hg. The more weight you lose the lower your blood pressure may drop.</p>

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## Lifestyle changes you can make to help lower your blood pressure (continued)

Lifestyle change	Average reduction in blood pressure
<p><b>Diet changes</b></p> <p>Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (the DASH diet) is recommended by the American Heart Association to help lower blood pressure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The DASH diet plan is based on 2,000 calories a day and is:</li> <li>▪ Low in saturated and total fat</li> <li>▪ Includes whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, poultry, fish and nuts</li> <li>▪ High in potassium, calcium, magnesium and fiber</li> </ul>	<p>The average drop in the top number of your blood pressure is 8 to 14 mm/Hg.</p>
<p><b>Reduce dietary sodium</b></p> <p>Reduce your daily intake of sodium (salt) to 2,400 mg a day or less by reading food labels on all foods and beverages (one teaspoon of salt = 2,400 mg sodium).</p>	<p>The average drop in the top number of your blood pressure is 2 to 8 mm/Hg.</p>
<p><b>Daily aerobic exercise</b></p> <p>Being physically active is one of the most important things you can do to prevent or control high blood pressure. All that is needed is 30 minutes of moderate level physical activity on most days of the week such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brisk walking</li> <li>▪ Bicycling</li> <li>▪ Raking leaves</li> <li>▪ Water aerobics</li> <li>▪ Swimming</li> </ul>	<p>The average drop in the top number of your blood pressure is 4 to 9 mm/Hg.</p>

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**Lifestyle changes you can make to help lower your blood pressure (continued)**

Lifestyle change	Average reduction in blood pressure
<p><b>Limit alcohol consumption</b></p> <p>Men: Less than two drinks per day</p> <p>Women and lighter weight men: Less than one drink per day. (One drink = 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1.5 oz. 80 proof whiskey)</p>	<p>The average drop in the top number of your blood pressure is 2 to 4 mm/Hg.</p>

If you're not sure what your current blood pressure is, ask your primary care physician to check it. If your blood pressure falls into either the prehypertension or hypertension category, talk to your doctor about what your blood pressure goal should be and work together to develop a plan to meet it. If medication is part of your blood pressure treatment be sure to discuss with your doctor what lifestyle changes you need to make in order to help your medication work more effectively. People with prehypertension can prevent hypertension by making these changes too.

*Brought to you by Healthy Blue Living. Healthy Blue Living members who have questions about their health, specific conditions or other health concerns, can call BlueHealthConnection® at 800-637-2972.*