



MAKE IT HAPPEN AT YOUR WORKPLACE!

Here are some suggestions to encourage and support healthy blood pressure at your workplace.

- ✓ Pack a lunch for yourself that has plenty of vegetables and fruit. Avoid pre-packaged foods that can be higher in sodium, such as packaged crackers and cheese spread, chips, and frozen dinners. Include low-fat milk products, such as yogurt and milk.
- ✓ Request that your vending machine supplier include healthier, low sodium snacks in the machines.
- ✓ Take advantage of break times and do some physical activity like stretching or walking. This will help you re-energize, reduce, or control your weight, and cope with stress.
- ✓ Learn to relax. Take several deep breaths and stretch breaks throughout the day if you are feeling stressed.
- ✓ Take ten minutes at the beginning of each day to prioritize and organize your day.

“Every human being is the author of his own health or disease.”

Hindu Prince Gautama Siddharta, the founder of Buddhism, 563-483 B.C.

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TIPS TO REDUCE SALT & SODIUM

It’s important to note how much sodium we are adding to our own food, but also take note of how much sodium has already been added to processed foods.

- Choose low or reduced sodium, or no salt versions of foods.
- Choose plenty of fresh, frozen, or canned (low sodium) vegetables and fruit.
- Use herbs and spices instead of salt to season food.
- Limit cured foods (e.g. bacon, ham, etc.), foods packed in brine (e.g., pickles, olives, etc.), and condiments (e.g., soy sauce, ketchup, etc.).
- Limit prepared foods that are high in sodium such as canned soups, most frozen dinners, salted nuts, pretzels, chips, crackers, and many fast food items.

LABEL LINGO	WHAT IT MEANS
SODIUM FREE	Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
LOW SODIUM	140 mg or less of sodium per serving
REDUCED OR LESS SODIUM	At least 25 percent less sodium than the regular version
UNSALTED OR NO SALT ADDED	No salt added to product in processing (not sodium-free)



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Answers (from front page):
 1-T • 2-T • 3-T • 4-F • 5-T
 6-F • 7-F • 8-T • 9-F • 10-T

SMART STEPS TO LIVE LONGER

KEEP YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE IN CHECK

SPRING 2008

It affects one in five Canadians and is the number one risk factor for stroke. You can’t see it or feel it, but five million Canadians have hypertension, also called high blood pressure. This number is likely much higher, as millions of Canadians may have high blood pressure and not even know it. Furthermore, with the increasing rate of obesity and the aging population, this number is expected to rise.

High blood pressure drastically increases your chances of developing heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, peripheral vascular disease, and erectile dysfunction. However, many of these outcomes can be prevented if your blood pressure is kept in a healthy range.

You need blood pressure in order for blood to flow and deliver oxygen and nutrients to the body. However, if your blood pressure is too high, it can cause damage to blood vessels. High blood pressure is typically defined as blood pressure that is consistently greater than, or equal to, 140 over 90 millimetres mercury (mmHg).

Blood pressure is measured with two numbers. Written as one over the other, such as 120/80. The top number is the systolic blood pressure, which is the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats and pumps blood. The bottom number is the diastolic blood pressure, which is the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart relaxes. The higher your systolic and diastolic pressure are and the longer these numbers are high, the more damage that can occur to your blood vessels. Strokes and heart attacks are caused by damaged blood vessels.

The latest Canadian blood pressure guidelines from the Heart and Stroke Foundation warn that approximately 2.5 million Canadians have “High-normal” blood pressure that is likely to develop into high blood pressure. High-normal blood pressure is blood pressure of 130-139/85-89 mmHg. Individuals in this range are at an increased risk for heart disease and stroke unless they lower their blood pressure. The new guidelines highlight the importance of early detection and prevention of high blood pressure and encourage healthier lifestyle choices.

Blood pressure is often higher in men than women of the same age. However, after menopause, blood pressure increases in women to levels even higher than in men. Many people, regardless of gender, develop high blood pressure as they get older. The Framingham Heart Study found that the lifetime risk of developing hypertension among 55 and 65-year-old individuals is greater than 90%. High blood pressure and increasing age are two of the most significant risk factors for death from heart disease.



QUIZ TRUE OR FALSE

- T 1. High blood pressure causes about 50% of heart disease world-wide.
- F 2. A blood pressure reading is made up of two numbers.
- T 3. There are risk factors for high blood pressure that you can’t change.
- F 4. High blood pressure only affects the heart.
- T 5. It is worthwhile to self monitor your blood pressure with a public blood pressure machine.
- F 6. Blood pressure should be monitored once every 5 years.
- T 7. Diabetes does not increase the risks associated with high blood pressure.
- F 8. It is possible to have high blood pressure and not notice any symptoms.
- T 9. Women have a lower incidence of high blood pressure after menopause.
- F 10. Limiting alcohol consumption can reduce your blood pressure.



WHY SHOULD I BE Concerned about Blood Pressure?

The World Health Organization reports that high blood pressure alone causes about 50 % of heart disease world wide. In Canada, high blood pressure is the most frequent diagnosis by family physicians. Even still, there are many people who have high blood pressure, but don't have it diagnosed.

The detection and treatment of hypertension in its earliest stages is important to prevent organ damage. When high blood pressure is not found and treated, it can lead to an enlarged heart and narrowing and hardening of blood vessels. The results of untreated hypertension include



anginal attack, myocardial infarction, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, atrial fibrillation, vision changes, and blindness. Furthermore, dementia and cognitive impairment occur more often in people with hypertension. Preventing and controlling high blood pressure is a very serious health issue.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW? KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Make sure that you find out what your blood pressure is. While you may not experience any symptoms of high blood pressure, you should have your blood pressure checked regularly. Getting your blood pressure measured is the only way to find out if you have high blood pressure. Always ask your health care provider to check your blood pressure and to tell you the numbers. Also, many of the blood pressure machines in public places such as pharmacies are calibrated and should be relatively accurate. Blood pressure should be monitored by a health care provider at least every two years or more frequently if you are at increased risk.

What should your blood pressure be?

If your blood pressure is less than 90/60 mmHg and you are experiencing signs and symptoms such as dizziness or fainting, your low blood pressure may be a concern.

Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mmHg

High-normal blood pressure is 130-139/85-89 mmHg

High blood pressure is over 140/90 mmHg

For people with diabetes or kidney disease, blood pressure should be maintained at less than 130/80 mmHg as these diseases add extra health risks.

GO FOR IT!

RESOURCES :

Blood Pressure Action Plan

Get started on the road to controlling your blood pressure and maintaining a healthy lifestyle with this self assessment tool from the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

www2.heartandstroke.ca/hs_bp2.asp

Your Guide to Lowering Your Blood Pressure with DASH

Get the information you need to get started on the DASH diet.

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf

How to Cope with Stress

This site provides tips for coping and understanding stress.

www.cmha.ca/data/1/rec_docs/403_CMHA_coping_with_stress_EN.pdf

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

www.heartandstroke.ca

Blood Pressure Canada

www.hypertension.ca/bpc/

The Heart Truth

www.thehearttruth.ca/

The College of Family Physicians of Canada

www.cfpc.ca

Kick Butts

www.kickbutts.ca

HOW CAN I CONTROL My Blood Pressure?

There are several risk factors for high blood pressure that you can control. Unfortunately, due to the uncontrollable risk factors, even with a healthy lifestyle, you may need to regulate blood pressure with medication as prescribed by your health care provider. Lifestyle modifications should always be the first step in prevention or management.

This chart shows you how much different lifestyle changes could lower blood pressure.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES	DETAILS	DROP IN SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE (mmHg)
LOSE EXCESS WEIGHT	For every 10 kilograms (22 pounds) you lose	5 to 20 points
FOLLOW A DASH DIET	Eat a lower-fat diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and low-fat milk products	8 to 14 points
BE ACTIVE DAILY	Get at least 30 minutes a day of aerobic activity (i.e., brisk walking)	4 to 9 points
LIMIT SODIUM	Eat no more than 2400 mg a day (1500 mg is better)	2 to 8 points
LIMIT ALCOHOL	Have no more than 2 drinks a day (men) and 1 drink a day (women). A drink is equal to a regular-sized bottle or can of beer (341 mL), a shot of liquor (43 mL), or a glass of wine (142 mL).	2 to 4 points

Quitting smoking as well as reducing and dealing with stress can also help to lower blood pressure. You can see that making small lifestyle changes alone or combined can make a big difference in your blood pressure.



A Focus on What You Eat: A GLANCE AT THE DASH DIET

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet is a way of eating that has been shown to lower blood pressure. The DASH eating plan follows heart healthy guidelines to limit saturated fat and sodium. It focuses on increasing intake of foods rich in whole grains, vegetables and fruit, magnesium, and potassium that are all effective in lowering blood pressure.

The DASH eating plan emphasizes eating foods high in potassium, especially vegetables and fruit, which helps to keep blood pressure levels healthy.

SODIUM

Sodium restriction is effective in lowering blood pressure. In 2007, Blood Pressure Canada set a policy recommendation to achieve a goal of reducing adult Canadians' sodium intake to between 1200 mg and 2300 mg per day by 2020. The average Canadian daily sodium intake is 3100 mg. Salt is a major contributor to this high sodium intake, as salt is made of sodium (40%) and chloride (60%).

If lifestyle changes are not enough to get your blood pressure within a healthy range, your health care provider will more than likely prescribe blood pressure medications. Even if you require medication to control your blood pressure, making lifestyle changes can help lower how much medication you take to control it. As an added bonus, healthy lifestyle changes that reduce your risk of high blood pressure will also reduce your risk of certain types of cancer and other chronic diseases.