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SP526-C-The Lowdown on High Blood Pressure

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Take Medications as Prescribed

- ❑ Medications will only work if taken as prescribed.
- ❑ Keep a record of your medications (prescription, over-the-counter, herbals and vitamins) to share with your doctor and pharmacist.
- ❑ Be aware that some over-the-counter medications may raise your blood pressure.
- ❑ Ask your county Extension office for a UT Med Minder card to help you remember the medications you are taking or print out a copy from the <http://bemedwisetn.tennessee.edu> Web site.

How Do You Know if You Have High Blood Pressure?

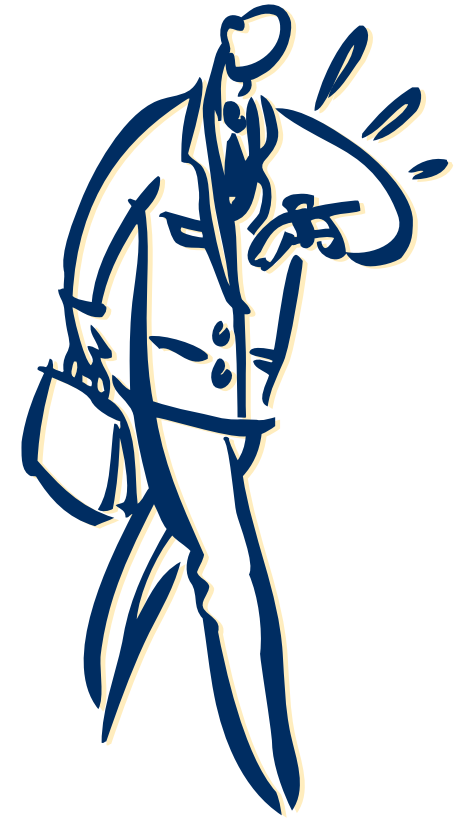
- ❑ Blood pressure is measured with a cuff wrapped around the upper part of your arm.
- ❑ High blood pressure readings by your healthcare provider may indicate high blood pressure.

For more information on high blood pressure and health, contact:

Visit the UT Extension Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/> and the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/>

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Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

The Lowdown on High Blood Pressure



a wellness publication written by
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Only you are responsible for your health. Learn self-care skills and lifestyle changes to control your blood pressure. (✓) Check those health actions you plan to try:

Know Your Level of Risk

(✓) Check those that apply to you.

- A family history of high blood pressure.
- Male.
- Overweight.
- A postmenopausal woman.
- Pregnant.
- 35 or older.
- African-American.
- Sensitive to sodium.
- A smoker.
- Stressed.
- Inactive.



Know Your Numbers

- ✓ Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg.
- ✓ Prehypertension is from 120/80 to 139/89 mm Hg.
- ✓ Hypertension is 140/90 mm Hg and above.

Activate your Lifestyle

- Relieve tension with exercise.
- Work up to 30 minutes of exercise, five or more days a week.
- Include stretching, aerobic and strengthening exercises.

Trim the Extra Weight

- Cut down on portion sizes.
- Avoid crash diets.
- Increase activity level.
- Eat more low-fat foods.
- Work at losing ½ to 1 pound per week.
- Walking, swimming and bicycling are good for losing weight.

Watch What You Eat and Drink

- Cut down on salt and high sodium foods, even if you are on high blood pressure medication.
- Choose low-fat foods.
- Eat the Food Guide Pyramid way.
- Watch the calories from sweets and snack foods.
- Limit alcoholic and caffeinated beverages.

Break the Smoking Habit

- Examine why you smoke.
- Explore other outlets to distract your need to smoke.
- Contact the Lung Association or American Cancer Society for programs to help you quit smoking.

Know About High Blood Pressure

- ✓ Called the silent killer because it has no symptoms.
- ✓ Causes serious problems to kidneys, brain, eyes and heart.
- ✓ If left untreated, it can lead to a stroke, kidney failure or eye problems.

Break the Tension Cycle

- Develop tension-release skills:
 - ◆ Exercise.
 - ◆ Breathe deeply.
 - ◆ Keep a positive attitude.
 - ◆ Accept what you can't control.
 - ◆ Pursue a hobby.
- Deal with small problems before they become big and out of control.
- Get adequate rest.