



# Keeping your blood pressure under control

Hypertension (high blood pressure) affects one out of three American adults. Although you may not have any symptoms from your high blood pressure, it can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, it can be controlled, and your risk can be reduced.



Pharmaceutical Assistance  
Contract for the Elderly

Balanced information for better care

# Decrease salt in your diet

## Reading nutrition labels

Most of the salt (sodium) we eat comes from processed or restaurant foods, not from the saltshaker. “Fast foods” are often extremely salty.

- **Eat or drink less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day** if you have high blood pressure.
- **Read nutrition labels** to find out how much salt (“sodium” on the label) is in a serving.
- **Pay attention to serving size.** If a food package is 2 servings and you eat the whole package, multiply the sodium content by the number of servings. For the label shown below, 650 mg x 2 servings = 1,300 mg sodium.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)	
Serving Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 200	Calories from Fat 120
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 15g	<b>20 %</b>
Saturated Fat 5g	<b>28 %</b>
Trans Fat 3g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg	<b>10 %</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 650mg	<b>28 %</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 30g	<b>10 %</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0 %</b>
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 5g	
Vitamin A 5%	• Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 15%	• Iron 5%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300mg 375mg
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

*Be sure to read nutrition labels for sodium content.*

# I have hypertension. What can I expect?

**Hypertension typically does not have any symptoms.** Your health care provider can diagnose hypertension by taking a reading of your blood pressure.

The goal blood pressure will differ from one person to another. Talk with your doctor about a healthy blood pressure target for you.

## What can I do?

These tips can help you take control of your hypertension.

1. **Decrease salt in your diet**
2. **Eat healthy foods**
3. **Increase physical activity**
4. **Maintain a healthy weight**
5. **Limit alcohol**
6. **Don't smoke**
7. **Take medications as prescribed**



## Eat healthy foods

The DASH diet was developed specifically to lower blood pressure. Information about the DASH diet can be found at

**[AlosaHealth.org/modules/hypertension](https://AlosaHealth.org/modules/hypertension)**.

EAT MORE +	EAT LESS -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• low-fat dairy</li><li>• whole grains</li><li>• fruits &amp; vegetables</li><li>• poultry, fish &amp; lean meat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sugars &amp; sweets</li><li>• salt</li><li>• alcohol</li><li>• fats</li></ul>

## Increase physical activity

Physical activity can help to lower your blood pressure.

- Aim to exercise 3-4 days per week.
- Start slow and aim for 30-60 minutes of exercise per session.
- Try different activities (i.e., walking, running, cycling, swimming, dancing)—whatever you enjoy.

You're more likely to stick with something you like. Make it social and invite a friend.

## Maintain a healthy weight

Eating a healthy diet and increasing physical activity help you maintain a healthy weight and can be a safe way to lose additional weight, if needed.

## Limit alcohol

Alcohol increases blood pressure. Limit alcohol use to two or fewer drinks per day.

## Don't smoke

Smoking increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. For help quitting, call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or visit **[smokefree.gov](https://smokefree.gov)**.

## Do I need medication?

Many people need one or more medications to achieve their blood pressure goals. Taking prescribed medications will reduce your risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and death. If you have side effects or concerns regarding medication, talk to your health care provider about your options.



---

## More information

For more about the DASH diet and additional information:

**[AlosaHealth.org/modules/hypertension](https://AlosaHealth.org/modules/hypertension)**

---

**The Independent Drug Information Service (IDIS)** is supported by the PACE Program of the Department of Aging of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This material is provided by Alosa Health, a nonprofit organization which is not affiliated with any pharmaceutical company. IDIS is a program of Alosa Health.

**These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating physician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.**

[AlosaHealth.org](http://AlosaHealth.org)



Pharmaceutical Assistance  
Contract for the Elderly



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF AGING



**IDIS**

Independent Drug  
Information Service



**Alosa  
Health**

**Balanced information for better care**

Copyright 2016 by Alosa Health. All rights reserved.