



# Keeping your blood pressure under control

Hypertension (high blood pressure) affects nearly half of American adults. Although high blood pressure usually doesn't cause any symptoms, it increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, it can be controlled, and your risk can be reduced.



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Balanced information for better care

## Decrease salt in your diet

- Most of the salt (sodium) we eat comes from **processed or restaurant foods**.
- “Fast foods” are often extremely salty.
- **Don’t automatically add salt** at the table. The more you get used to food with less salt, the better it will taste.
- **Read nutrition labels** to find out how much salt (“sodium” on the label) is in a serving.
- **Eat or drink less than a total of 2,300 mg of sodium per day** if you have high blood pressure.
- **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. That would be more than half the recommended daily intake of salt!

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)	
Serving Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	200
Calories from Fat 120	
% Daily Value*	
<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

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

## I have high blood pressure. What can I expect?

**Hypertension usually doesn’t cause any symptoms.** The only way to tell if you have it is to have your blood pressure measured. 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**

**Checking your blood pressure at home** can help your doctor adjust your hypertension treatment. Ask your doctor whether you should get a blood pressure monitor to use at home.



## Eat healthy foods

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

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

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

Too much alcohol can increase your 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](http://smokefree.gov)**.

## Do I need medication?

Many people need one or more medications to achieve their blood pressure goal. These medications are safe, effective, and affordable, and have been studied in tens of thousands of patients over many decades.

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 a healthy diet and what you can do to control your blood pressure: **[AlosaHealth.org/Hypertension](http://AlosaHealth.org/Hypertension)**

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**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)



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