

Wholehearted Living

Heart Health Edition

Bridging Science, Spirit, and Self-Care
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Hypertension:

The most prevalent and modifiable risk factor for Cardiovascular Disease



Understanding Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps it through your body.

- The **systolic pressure** (top number) measures how much pressure your blood exerts when the heart contracts and pumps.
- The **diastolic pressure** (bottom number) measures the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats.

SCREENING

Goal (currently guidelines) for adults is 130/80 mm Hg

- Normal <120/<80
- Elevated 120-129/<80
- Stage 1 HTN 130-139/80-89
- Stage 2 HTN >140/>90

PREVENTION

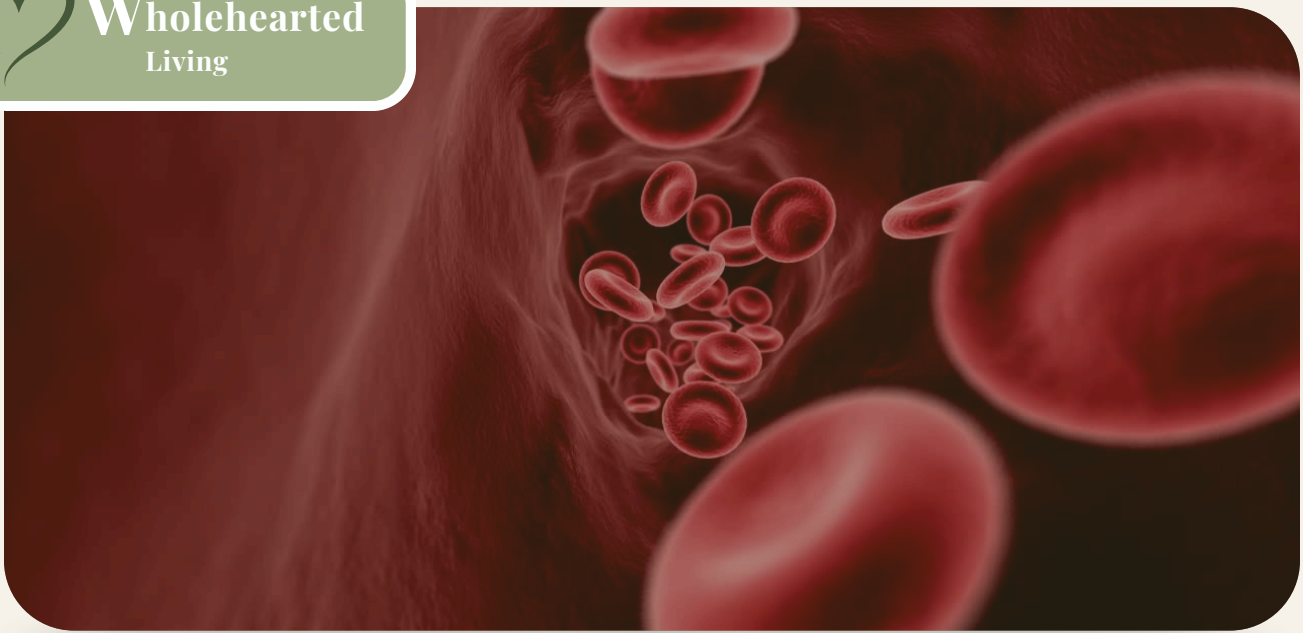
Lifestyle Changes

- DASH Diet , reduce sodium, increase potassium
- Manage stress
- Moderate Activity/Exercise
- Reduce/Eliminate alcohol

TREATMENT

Medication in addition to lifestyle modification

Average BP >140/>90 or stage 1 HTN with clinical CVD, stroke, diabetes, CKD, (PREVENT study)



PUMPING BLOOD

Understanding Blood Pressure

A certain amount of pressure is necessary to deliver **oxygen and nutrients** to your organs and tissues. However, when blood pressure stays **too high for too long**, it places extra strain on the blood vessel walls and forces the heart to work harder than it should. Over time, this can lead to **damage to blood vessels and vital organs**, increasing the risk of **heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and heart failure**.

Secondary Causes of High Blood Pressure

While most cases of high blood pressure (hypertension) are related to **lifestyle factors**, there are times when an underlying condition or substance contributes. These are known as **secondary causes** and may include:

- **Primary aldosteronism** (a hormone imbalance causing salt and fluid retention)
- **Obstructive sleep apnea** (breathing pauses during sleep that raise blood pressure)
- Certain **medications** such as steroids, NSAIDs, decongestants, or oral contraceptives
- **Supplements or substances** like licorice, caffeine, alcohol, or certain herbal products

Identifying and addressing these underlying factors can make a big difference in controlling blood pressure and reducing long-term risks.



ACCURATE BP MEASUREMENT TIPS

Checking your blood pressure at home or in a clinic, proper technique ensures accurate results:

1. Use a validated device with the correct cuff size.
2. Avoid caffeine, smoking, or exercise for at least 30 minutes before checking.
3. Sit quietly for 5 minutes, feet flat on the floor, back supported, and legs uncrossed.
4. Keep your arm supported at heart level, with the cuff placed just above the elbow.
5. Do not talk, text, or scroll while measuring.
6. If you get a high reading, wait at least 1 minute and take another measurement.
7. For diagnosis, readings should be confirmed on multiple occasions.



Medication Approaches for High Blood Pressure

If lifestyle changes alone are not enough to control blood pressure, your healthcare provider may recommend starting antihypertensive medication. The initial choice often depends on your overall health, age, and other medical conditions (comorbidities).

Common first-line medications include:

- **ACE inhibitors** (Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme inhibitors) – help relax blood vessels and reduce strain on the heart. Examples: lisinopril, enalapril.
- **ARBs** (Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers) – similar to ACE inhibitors but often used if you experience a cough or other side effects. Examples: losartan, valsartan.
- **Thiazide diuretics** – help the body remove excess salt and water, lowering blood pressure and reducing swelling. Examples: hydrochlorothiazide, chlorthalidone.

In some cases, other medications may be added or substituted based on additional conditions:

- **Beta-blockers** (e.g., metoprolol, carvedilol) may be preferred in patients with heart failure, prior heart attack, or certain arrhythmias.
- **Calcium channel blockers** (e.g., amlodipine, diltiazem) can be helpful for angina, certain heart rhythm issues, or when additional blood pressure control is needed.

Most people require more than one medication to reach their target blood pressure. The goal is to find the right combination that effectively lowers blood pressure while minimizing side effects.

Wholehearted Pharm | Movement • Faith • Healing • Lifestyle Medicine



Simple Shifts, Big Impact

A diagnosis is not a life sentence – it's an invitation to transformation.

High blood pressure doesn't define you.
It's your body's way of saying,
"Something needs care."

The good news?

Small, intentional steps can make a
powerful difference.



Lifestyle Habits That Heal

- Move daily—walk, stretch, or flow
- Choose foods from the earth
- Limit sodium, caffeine, and processed foods
- Prioritize rest and recovery
- Build supportive connections



Faith & Mindfulness Practices

- Begin and end your day in prayer
- Meditate on a verse while breathing slowly
- Journal gratitude for what your body can do
- Offer your stress to God with each exhale
- Worship through movement and stillness

SIMPLE SHIFTS, BIG IMPACT

Move with purpose. Walk, stretch, dance, or roll out your mat — movement is medicine.

BREATHE DEEPLY

Each slow breath signals peace to your heart and nervous system.

NOURISH YOUR BODY

Choose foods from the earth more often than from a box.

REST AND RESET

Sleep is when your body repairs and restores balance.

STAY CONNECTED

Build supportive relationships and lean on faith, community, and gratitude.

"You are not broken - you are being refined."

"Healing happens in the small daily choices."

*Let your heart be strengthened, not burdened; for every beat
is grace in motion."*