

Why Does Blood Pressure Become High?

This Month's Focus

One of the questions I hear most often is, "Karen...how did I end up with high blood pressure?"

The answer is usually not one thing.

For most people, high blood pressure develops slowly over many years. It isn't caused by one stressful day, one salty meal, or one missed workout.

Instead, it's often the result of several small factors working together over time.

From Karen...

High blood pressure is rarely caused by one thing—and it's rarely improved by one thing, either.

The good news is that small, healthy choices add up over time.

Every walk, every healthier meal, every good night's sleep, and every step toward a healthier lifestyle is an investment in your heart.

MANY EVERYDAY HABITS CAN INFLUENCE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE OVER TIME.

GENETICS & FAMILY HISTORY

If high blood pressure runs in your family, you may be more likely to develop it.

STRESS

Long-term stress can make healthy habits harder to maintain and may affect blood pressure over time.

POOR SLEEP

Not getting enough sleep—or conditions like sleep apnea—can make it harder to keep blood pressure in a healthy range.

EXCESS ALCOHOL

Drinking more than moderate amounts of alcohol can raise blood pressure.

EVERYDAY EATING HABITS

Diets high in processed foods, sodium, and saturated fats—and low in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fiber—can contribute to higher blood pressure.

EXTRA WEIGHT

Carrying extra weight, especially around the belly, makes your heart work harder and raises blood pressure.

NOT ENOUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular movement helps keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. A sedentary lifestyle increases your risk.

SMOKING & TOBACCO USE

Smoking damages blood vessels and can raise blood pressure.

These factors can work together over time to raise blood pressure.

SOME THINGS WE CAN CHANGE

- ✓ The foods we eat
- ✓ Physical activity
- ✓ Extra weight
- ✓ Sleep
- ✓ Stress management
- ✓ Smoking & excess alcohol

Small changes can make a big difference over time.

SOME THINGS WE CAN'T CHANGE

- Family history
If high blood pressure runs in your family, you may be more likely to develop it.
- Getting older
As we age, our blood vessels naturally become less flexible, making high blood pressure more common.

Some things are out of our control. What matters most is what we do with the things we can control.

★ Sometimes another medical condition or medication can contribute to high blood pressure. If I think that's the case, we'll talk about it together.

Karen's Challenge

CHOOSE ONE HEART-HEALTHY HABIT TO FOCUS ON THIS WEEK.

- ☐ Take a 15-minute walk most days.
- ☐ Add one serving of vegetables to your day.
- ☐ Drink more water.
- ☐ Aim for an earlier bedtime.
- ☐ Cook one meal at home instead of eating out.
- ☐ Other:

Remember...

You don't have to be perfect. You just have to be willing to keep showing up for your health, one small step at a time.

Contact Karen

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I'm here for you..

If you have questions or concerns about your heart health, I'm always here to help.