
This information is formatted in 14 point font for readers with low vision. Additional accessible formats are available... ask your doctor or medical assistant.

Steps to a Lower Blood Pressure

Hypertension or high blood pressure is often called the silent killer because there are no warning signs or symptoms. Once you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, you need to take steps to control it and stay healthy. If you choose not to treat your high blood pressure it can lead to a heart attack, stroke, heart failure or kidney failure.

Follow these steps to learn how to lower your blood pressure:

First Step

Follow your provider's treatment plan.

You may need to:

- Change your diet
- Lose weight
- Exercise
- Stop smoking
- Limit your use of alcohol
- Lower your stress
- Take medicine to help control your blood pressure.

And, you may need to learn how to check your blood pressure often to see if you are keeping it under control.

Second Step

Change your diet. This may not be as hard as you think.

- A good place to start is to lower the amount of salt in your diet. Take the salt shaker off the table. Stop cooking with salt. Learn to use herbs to flavor your food. Only use a salt substitute if it is approved by your provider.
- You can also change the way you eat to help you lose weight. Weight can be a big factor in lowering your blood pressure.
- Learn to read food labels.

You may want to ask your provider about the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet.

Third Step

Be Active! Talk with your provider before you begin any exercise plan. The best kinds of exercise are:

- Brisk walking
- Swimming
- Running
- Jumping rope

These exercises help your heart and lungs. They help by increasing your heart rate and oxygen use. Try to do 30 minutes of exercise at least 5 days a week.

Fourth Step

Quit smoking. One of the best things you can do for your heart is to stop smoking. If you have high blood pressure and smoke, your risks for heart disease and lung disease are doubled. Your risk for stroke also increases. Once you decide to quit, Molina Healthcare can help you with a stop smoking program. Call the Member Services number on your Molina Healthcare member card and ask about the stop smoking program.

Fifth Step

Take your medicine. If you find that diet changes and exercise are not enough to lower your blood pressure, you may need to take medicine. Once you start your medicine, you must take it every day. This will help to keep your blood pressure lower. Ask your provider:

- How to check your blood pressure and keep a record
- About any side effects of the medicine
- About using over-the-counter medicines
- How to lower your stress

Once you have lowered your blood pressure, stay with your treatment plan:

- Keep all appointments with your provider.
- Keep taking your medicine. You may need to try different medicines to get your blood pressure under control and keep it there.
- Check your blood pressure often.
- Get your cholesterol checked at least yearly. If it is high your provider can help you lower it.

If your blood pressure is still high, talk to your provider about trying other medicines.

This chart will help you set your heart healthy goals.

HEART NUMBERS	GOAL
Total Cholesterol	Desirable: Less than 200 mg/dL Borderline High: 200-239 mg/dL High: higher than 240 mg/dL
LDL (Bad) Cholesterol	Optimal: less than 100 mg/dL Near optimal/Above optimal: 100-129 mg/dL Borderline High: 130-159 mg/dL High: 160-189 mg/dL Very High: Higher than 190 mg/dL
HDL (Good) Cholesterol	Women: 50 mg/dL or higher Men: 40 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL
Blood Pressure	People who are at low risk for heart disease: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than 120/80 mm Hg People with hypertension: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than 140/90 mm Hg People with hypertension and diabetes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than 130/80 mm Hg