



# HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTH GUIDE

## What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against your arteries as the blood circulates throughout your body. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, occurs when the pressure level stays high for a long period of time without falling to a normal level. This can lead to serious health conditions such as heart disease and stroke. Managing your blood pressure is key to a healthy heart.

	Systolic (top#)		Diastolic (bottom#)
Normal	<120	and	<80
Pre-hypertension	121-139	or	81-99
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	or	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥160	or	≥ 100

## Quick Tips to Remember Before You Check Your Blood Pressure

- No caffeine (coffee, tea, soda) or cigarettes 30 minutes before measuring blood pressure.
- No exercise right before measuring blood pressure.
- Go to the bathroom before checking blood pressure. A full bladder can change the reading.
- Check your blood pressure in a quiet place. Remain quiet and do not talk.
- Relax in a chair that supports your back and is next to a table for 5 to 10 minutes. Your arm should rest at heart level.
- Sit up straight and do not cross your legs.
- You should check your blood pressure on a bare arm.
- Take your blood pressure about the same time each day.
- Do at least two readings more than two minutes apart. If you can, average the readings for a better idea of your blood pressure level.
- Check your blood pressure several times a day to see if it changes.
- Write your blood pressures down in a diary each time you take them or store your readings on your blood pressure monitor system.
- Bring your blood pressure readings when you visit the doctor.

## Home Blood Pressure Monitoring

Blood pressure cuffs can be purchased at pharmacies and other retailers. No prescription is needed and costs range from \$20-\$120. When a specific type of machine is required and a physician writes a prescription, insurance may cover the cost. Ask your provider if home monitoring is right for you.

## Local Screening

Many faith-based organizations also provide blood pressure screening. Please check with your local congregations to see if they offer screenings.

## Did You Know?

Your local hospitals offer free or low-cost programs and classes to help keep your heart healthy. These programs will support you and your family and help you avoid heart disease. Contact a hospital near you to learn more. Topics include:

- ♥ High Blood Pressure
- ♥ Diabetes
- ♥ Heart Disease





# DIABETES & PREDIABETES HEALTH GUIDE

## What is Diabetes & Prediabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which your blood glucose (sugar) levels are too high. Over time, high levels of blood glucose can damage the nerves and small blood vessels of the eyes, kidneys, and heart. Before people develop type 2 diabetes, they almost always have “prediabetes” – glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. (See Know Your Numbers Panel.) Early detection and treatment can reduce the risk of developing complications from diabetes.

## Prevention

### HEALTHY WEIGHT

Staying at a healthy weight can help you prevent and manage problems like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, and high blood glucose.

### HEALTHY EATING

Eating well to maintain a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. It can seem hard to make healthy food choices, particularly if you are on a budget and short on time. But there are some simple steps you can take to help you and your family eat healthier. Choose one or two of these suggestions to start today.

- Use a grocery list when shopping for food to help you choose more fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Buy leaner meats (such as chicken, turkey and lean cuts of pork or beef such as sirloin or chuck roast) and lower fat dairy products (like low-fat or skim milk and yogurt).
- Buy whole grain breads and cereals.
- Save money by buying less soda, sweets and chips or other snack foods.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Even if you’ve never exercised before, you can find ways to add physical activity to your day. Physical activity can be beneficial even if it is not strenuous. Incorporating physical activity into your life can greatly improve overall health.

## Know Your Numbers

The A1C test measures your average blood glucose for the past 2-3 months

Result	A1C
Normal:	< 5.7%
Prediabetes:	5.7%-6.4%
Diabetes:	≥ 6.5%

## National Links

(Includes resources, recipes and tips)

Visit [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) for more diabetes resources and information about activities through the local office of the American Diabetes Association.

Visit [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention) for more information about the CDC’s National Diabetes Prevention Program.

## Did You Know?

Some groups have a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes than others. Type 2 diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, as well as the aged population.





# HEALTHY EATING GUIDE

## Why is Healthy Eating Important?

Healthy foods and drinks are essential for good health. This includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, water, milk and 100% juice. Eating well provides important nutrients - vitamins, minerals, protein, essential fats, and energy. Combined, these nutrients build strength, a healthy immune system, and more energy. Without a well-balanced diet, the risk of disease increases.

## Why See a Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist?

To practice dietetics in Maryland, Registered Dietitians (RDs) must be licensed by the Board of Dietetic Practice. Research shows that overweight individuals who receive medical nutrition therapy provided by a RD in addition to obesity-related health management from physician visits, nursing support, and education, are more likely to achieve significant weight loss.

- *More RDs may be found at: [www.eatright.org/programs/rdfinder/](http://www.eatright.org/programs/rdfinder/)  
Some RDs accept insurance, others will provide a bill that you can submit to your insurance company. In addition, some primary care practices have dietitians available to their patients. Check with your provider.*

To practice in Maryland, nutritionists must be licensed by the Board of Dietetic Practice. Nutritionists provide therapeutic nutrition care including: assessment, goal setting, counseling, and evaluating nutrient-drug interaction. Integrative nutritionists focus on whole foods, nutritional supplements, mindful eating, and client centered care.

- *To find an integrative nutritionist, contact Maryland University of Integrative Health's Natural Care Center at 410.888.9048 ext. 6614, or [naturalcarecenter@muih.edu](mailto:naturalcarecenter@muih.edu) or visit [www.muih.edu/health-resources/find-practitioner](http://www.muih.edu/health-resources/find-practitioner).*

## Online Resources

[Betterbeveragefinder.org](http://Betterbeveragefinder.org)  
[Heart.org/simplecooking](http://Heart.org/simplecooking)  
[Nutrition.gov](http://Nutrition.gov)  
[Eatright.org](http://Eatright.org)  
[Health.gov](http://Health.gov)  
[Kidshealth.org](http://Kidshealth.org)  
[Superhealthykids.com](http://Superhealthykids.com)  
[Fitness.gov](http://Fitness.gov)  
[ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov)

## Maryland University of Integrative Health

Free lectures and webinars on integrative and functional nutrition are available at: [www.muih.edu](http://www.muih.edu). MUIH also offers consultations in integrative and functional nutrition. Affordable services are provided by graduate student interns and licensed faculty practitioners at the Natural Care Center. Contact: [naturalcarecenter@muih.edu](mailto:naturalcarecenter@muih.edu) or 410. 888.9048 ext. 6614







# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDE

## Why Is Physical Activity Important?

Physical activity is about moving and using energy. In addition to this being an important part of maintaining a healthy weight, regular movement helps joints stay flexible, muscles stay strong and active, and immune systems stay strong. How much activity is enough? Just 30 minutes of movement that increases the heart rate, five days a week, will help keep the heart, mind, and body in great shape!

*Be sure to talk to your health care provider before beginning any new exercise program.*

## The Benefits of Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help:

- Control your weight
- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, if you're an older adult
- Increase your chances of living longer

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
<b>Example I</b>	30 mins. of brisk walking	30 mins. of brisk walking	Resistance band exercises	30 mins. of brisk walking	Resistance band exercises	30 mins. of brisk walking	30 mins. of brisk walking
<b>Example II</b>	30 mins. of brisk walking	60 mins. of playing softball	30 mins. of brisk walking	30 mins. of brisk walking		Heavy Gardening	Heavy Gardening

### Example I Physical Activity Total:

150 minutes moderate-intensity aerobic activity AND 2 days muscle strengthening

### Example II Physical Activity Total:

150 minutes moderate-intensity aerobic activity AND 2 days muscle strengthening

## Online Resources

[www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

[www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)

## Did You Know?

According to the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition:

Less than 5% of adults participate in 30 minutes of physical activity each day; only one in three adults receives the recommended amount of physical activity each week.

28% of Americans, or 80.2 million people, aged six and older are physically inactive.

Children now spend more than seven and a half hours a day in front of a screen (e.g., TV, video games, computer).

## Get Fit Tips

Keep sneakers with you at work to mix in physical activity throughout the day.

Bad weather? Try an active video game or keep an exercise DVD on hand.





# QUIT SMOKING GUIDE

## Maryland Tobacco Cessation Programs

For providers: MD Quit Now (<http://mdquit.org>) offers a wide variety of resources for professionals/providers and funds tobacco cessation programs.

For consumers: MD Quitline provides tobacco cessation help via phone, text, mail or on-line at:

1.800.QUIT.NOW (1.800.784.8669) or <http://smokingstopshere.com>

## Maryland University of Integrative Health Natural Care Center

This clinic provides acupuncture to assist with reducing cravings for and cleansing the body of addictive substances like tobacco. Acupuncture also creates a sense of ease during the full process of quitting. Affordable acupuncture treatments are provided by graduate student interns and licensed faculty practitioners. Contact: [naturalcarecenter@muih.edu](mailto:naturalcarecenter@muih.edu) or 410-888-9048 ext. 6614.

## Freedom From Smoking – American Lung Association MD Chapter

The Freedom From Smoking® (FFS) program is for adults who are ready to quit smoking. Because most people know that smoking is dangerous to their health, the program focuses almost exclusively on how to quit, not why to quit. There are online and in-person options available.

Contact: [www.ffsonline.org](http://www.ffsonline.org) or

<http://www.lung.org/associations/states/maryland/programs/freedom-from-smoking/>



## Quitting is Hard

Millions of people have been able to quit smoking and you can too! An important first step of the quit process is learning why you feel like you need to smoke. When you understand why you smoke, you can prepare yourself to find the best ways to quit.

## Did You Know?

Three out of four teen smokers who think they will stop smoking in a few years do not.

Nearly nine out of ten adult smokers started by age 18.

Smoking causes cancer, heart attacks and serious lung disease.

More than 7,000 chemicals are found in a single puff of cigarette smoke.

On average, every cigarette takes eleven minutes off your life.

Cigarette smoking causes about 480,000 deaths per year in the United States.

One out of five deaths in the United States is caused by smoking.



# PREPARE TO QUIT GUIDE

## 1. Set a Quit Date

Pick a date in the next two weeks to quit smoking. This is enough time to prepare. Avoid choosing a day you know you will be busy, stressed, or tempted to smoke.

## 2. Tell Family and Friends—Support is Key!

Quitting smoking is easier with support. Let friends and family know you are planning to quit. Here are a few ways to START the conversation:

- Tell family and friends your reasons for quitting.
- Ask them to check in with you to see how things are going. Ask for help dealing with your triggers.
- Ask them to help you think of smoke-free activities you can do together (like going to the movies).
- Know a friend or family member who smokes? Ask them to quit with you, or not smoke nearby.
- You are going to be tempted to smoke. Ask friends and family not to let you have a cigarette—no matter what.
- Let them know that you may be in a bad mood and ask them to be patient and help you.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist you are quitting. You may need to change your prescriptions after you quit.

## 3. Anticipate and Plan for Challenges

The first few weeks are the hardest. Anticipate your challenges. Get a head START. Prepare for the following:

### Uncomfortable Feelings—Withdrawal

Withdrawal happens when your body is getting used to not having nicotine from cigarettes. Some of the more common feelings that come with withdrawal are:

- Feeling a little depressed
- Not being able to sleep
- Getting cranky, frustrated, or mad
- Feeling anxious, nervous, or restless
- Having trouble thinking clearly

You may be tempted to smoke to relieve these feelings.

Just remember that they are temporary, no matter how powerful they feel at the time.

Smoking Triggers are specific persons, places, or activities that make you feel like smoking. It is important to know your triggers so you can learn to deal with them.

Cravings are short but intense urges to smoke. They usually only last a few minutes. Plan ahead and have a list of activities you can do when you get a craving.

## 4. Remove Cigarettes and Other Tobacco From Your Home, Car, and Work

Removing things that remind you of smoking will get you ready to quit. Try these tips:

- Throw away all your cigarettes, lighters, matches, and ash trays. Remember the ashtray and lighter in your car!
- Don't save one pack of cigarettes "just in case". Keeping one pack just makes it easier to start again.
- Remove the smell of cigarettes from your life. Make things clean and fresh at work, in your car, and at home. Clean drapes, clothes, and your car. You will be less tempted to light up if you don't smell smoke.

### Don't Use Other Products with Tobacco

All tobacco products contain harmful chemicals and poisons, including light or low-tar. Smokeless tobacco, pipes, cigars, cigarillos, hookahs (waterpipes), bidi cigarettes, clove cigarettes, and herbal cigarettes also hurt your health.

## 5. Talk to a Doctor/Pharmacist About Quit Options

It is difficult to quit smoking on your own, but quitting "cold turkey" is not your only choice. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about other support options.

Quit smoking medications are also an effective quit option. Many quit smoking medicines, especially Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), are available without a prescription. This includes the nicotine patch, nicotine gum, or nicotine lozenge. Read the instructions before using any medications. If you have questions about a medication, ask your pharmacist. If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, consult your doctor before using any type of medication. For more information visit: <http://smokefree.gov/explore-medications>.

