

Questions to Ask About Your Blood Pressure



More than 100 million people in the United States have high blood pressure, but many don't know it. High blood pressure usually doesn't cause symptoms, but it can lead to serious health effects. It is important to know what your blood pressure is and how to keep it in a healthy range. To help you keep track, get your blood pressure checked by a healthcare provider at least once a year. Here are some tips for meeting with a provider:

- Decide what questions you want to ask and consider writing them down before you meet.
- When you meet with the provider, be sure to ask all of your questions.
- If you don't understand something the provider says, ask for a clearer explanation.
- Take notes to refer to later.

To start the conversation, here are some basic questions to ask:

- What is my blood pressure?
- What do my blood pressure numbers mean for me?
- Do I need to do anything about my blood pressure?
- How often should I check my blood pressure?



If you have *healthy* blood pressure (usually less than 120/80 mm Hg)

- What can I do to keep my blood pressure in this healthy range?
- Is there anything I should avoid?

If you have *high* blood pressure (consistently 130/80 mm Hg or higher)

- Could any of my medicines (prescription or over-the-counter) or my other health conditions be affecting my blood pressure?
- What can I do to lower my blood pressure?
- Should I make any changes to my diet?
- Will losing weight help my blood pressure? If so, how much should I try to lose?
- Would exercising more help? If so, how often should I exercise, and for how long?
- Would meditating or just relaxing more help?
- If I smoke or drink, will it help if I stop doing either?
- Should I get a home blood pressure monitor to check my pressure, or is it okay to use the blood pressure monitor at the grocery store or pharmacy?
- What do my blood pressure numbers mean for me if I'm pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant? Should I do anything differently before, during, or after delivery?

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If your provider suggests that you get a home blood pressure monitor

- Can someone in your office make sure it is working correctly and that I'm using it the right way?
- Are there any monitors that don't cost too much or are covered by my health insurance?
- How often should I use my home monitor to check my blood pressure?
- What time of day should I check it?
- Do I need to keep a record of my blood pressure numbers? Should I share my numbers with you?
- If I measure my pressure and it's high, what should I do?

If you're prescribed medicine for your blood pressure

- Do I need to take the medicine with food?
- Is there a specific time of day that I should take the medicine?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Is it okay if I stop taking it on my own?
- What side effects does this medication have? Will I have any limitations while taking it?
- Will the medicine interact with any of the other ones I take?
- If I am having a medical procedure or getting a vaccination, should I still take my medicine?
- Is my medicine working correctly to keep my blood pressure in a healthy range? If not, is there another medicine I should try?
- My medicine is causing me side effects. Is there a different one I can try?

Notes

Make the most of your visit with your healthcare provider. Working closely with your provider will help you stay heart healthy!

The Heart Truth[®] has more information about blood pressure, resources to track your numbers, information about heart-healthy lifestyles, like following the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan, and more. Visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hypertension.

