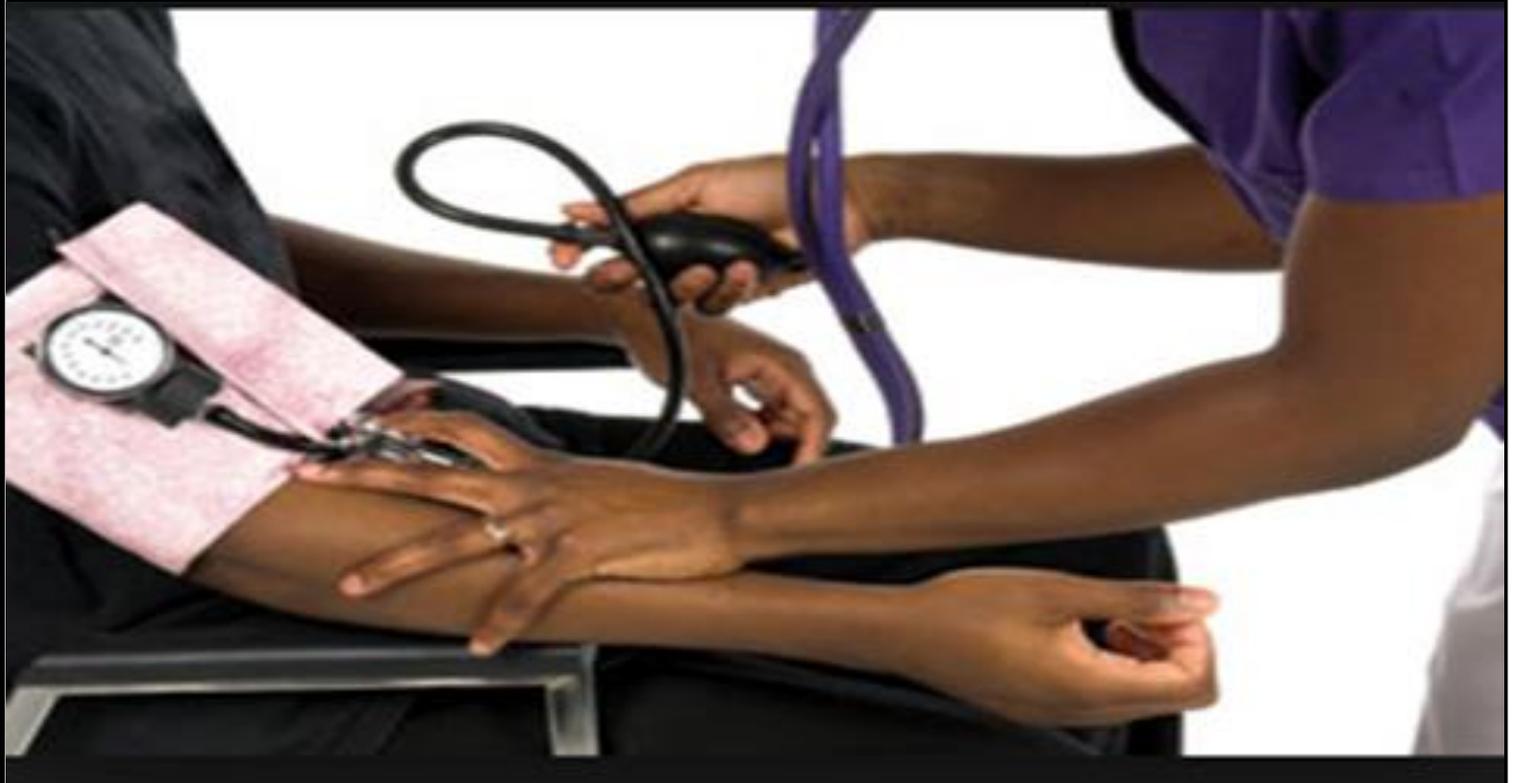


High Blood Pressure and your Health



Supporting You to
Take Control of *YOUR*
Health

**Changes You Can Make To
Manage and Prevent High Blood**

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What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force that pushes your blood from your heart to your body's organs and muscles so they can receive the oxygen and nutrients they need.

What is *High* Blood Pressure?

High Blood Pressure, also known as **hypertension**, is when the force of blood is constantly too high. It is a symptomless “silent killer” that quietly damages blood vessels which can lead to serious health problems.

What is Normal Blood Pressure?

Ideally as an adult, your blood pressure should be less than 120mmHg **and** less than 80mmHg (<120/80mmHg).

Anything above these numbers puts your health at risk.

Systolic (upper number) is the pressure of your blood when your heart pumps the blood out. **Diastolic (lower number)** is the pressure of your blood when your heart fills with blood.

[Blood pressure level (mmHg) = systolic/diastolic]

Blood Pressure Levels	
Normal	systolic: less than 120 mmHg diastolic: less than 80mmHg
At risk (prehypertension)	systolic: 120–139 mmHg diastolic: 80–89 mmHg
High	systolic: 140 mmHg or higher diastolic: 90 mmHg or higher

What Causes *High* Blood Pressure?

- Being overweight or obese
- High stress and anxiety
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Excessive salt intake
- Not being physically active
- Your family history
- Smoking

How do I manage my Blood Pressure?

***Lifestyle changes* are important in helping you control your high blood pressure and its associated risks. Here are some things you can do to improve your blood pressure.**

- Adopting healthy eating habits
- Increasing physical activity
- Reducing your alcohol consumption
- Stop smoking
- Managing your stress – For example: exercise, connect with people and relax by reading, praying, meditating listening to music.

Also, remember to:

- Take your medications **as prescribed by your doctor.**
- Get your blood pressure measured on a regular basis at your local medical clinic.

How do I Prevent High Blood Pressure?

- Have regular check-ups with your medical doctor
- Maintain a healthy diet, for example:
 - Eat more fruits and vegetables, eat more lean meat, drink more water, eat foods rich in potassium (bananas, potatoes, yogurt, fish, etc.), limit fatty foods, palm oil and sugar, reduce the salt in your food by avoiding high-sodium packaged and processed foods (Maggi cube) and by not adding extra salt to your meals.
- Change your daily lifestyle habits, including:
 - Walk, run or bike ride for at least 20-30 minutes each day
 - Maintain a healthy weight [Have your doctor calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI) to determine if you are within a healthy range.]
 - Drink less alcohol (Men should have no more than 2 drinks per day, and women should have no more than 1 drink per day)
 - If you do not smoke, do not start. If you do smoke, quit smoking

Want to get more information?

Talk to your medical doctor, visit your local medical center, visit your local medical center or check out the website below:

[Engage Africa Foundation](http://www.engageafricafoundation.org/blog/view/high-blood-pressure-hypertension)

<http://www.engageafricafoundation.org/blog/view/high-blood-pressure-hypertension>

Other Useful Links:

[World Health Organization](http://www.who.int/features/qa/82/en/)

<http://www.who.int/features/qa/82/en/>