



Blood Pressure Guide

For EUTF HMSA Members
2025-26





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A guide to understanding blood pressure

We want you to live a full, healthy life in your working years and through retirement. An important way to improve your well-being is to use the health plan benefits you're already paying for and to choose a healthy lifestyle. We hope this guide motivates you to use your benefits to achieve your best health!

Did you know?

High blood pressure doesn't just happen to older adults.

Having high blood pressure increases your risk of a heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and other complications:

- ✓ Seven in 10 people who have a first heart attack have high blood pressure.
- ✓ Three in 4 people who have a stroke have high blood pressure.
- ✓ Three in 4 people who have congestive heart failure have high blood pressure.
- ✓ One in 3 adults over the age of 20 has elevated or high blood pressure.
- ✓ One in 4 adults with high blood pressure has their condition under control.

What's high blood pressure?

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is when the force of blood flowing through your blood vessels is consistently too high.

Reasons to know your blood pressure

One in three Hawaii adults has high blood pressure and many don't know they have it. Most of the time, there are no obvious symptoms. Certain physical traits and lifestyle choices can put you at a greater risk for high blood pressure.

Left untreated, high blood pressure can damage your circulatory system, leading to heart attack, stroke, and other health conditions.

Some health risks of high blood pressure



Blindness



Heart attack and heart disease



Kidney disease



Stroke

Top 5 things you can do today to improve and maintain healthy blood pressure

1. Eat more whole foods

Fill your plate with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. The DASH eating plan helps lower blood pressure. Learn more: heart.org/DASH

2. Move for 30 minutes

Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity like walking, biking, or swimming most days. It helps your heart and lowers blood pressure. Learn more: cdc.gov/physicalactivity

3. Cut back on salt

Most of the salt we eat comes from packaged and restaurant foods. Read labels and cook more at home to reduce sodium. Learn more: cdc.gov/salt

4. Watch your weight

Even small weight loss can make a big difference. Losing just five to 10 pounds can help lower your blood pressure. Learn more: heart.org/weight

5. Limit alcohol and quit tobacco

Drink alcohol in moderation and avoid tobacco. Both can raise your blood pressure and harm your heart. Learn more: hawaiiquitline.org

There's good news!

There are many things you can do to keep your blood pressure within a healthy range.

While there generally isn't a single cause of high blood pressure, reducing risk factors such as smoking, poor diet, being inactive, overweight, or obese, or having high levels of stress can have a positive impact.

The best way to protect yourself is to work with your primary care provider (PCP) and make healthy changes to your lifestyle.

Based on guidance from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and AHA (American Heart Association).



Do you know your blood pressure?

A blood pressure reading of more than 120/80 means that there's too much pressure on the walls of your blood vessels. Use this chart to understand your numbers.

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps blood throughout your body. The top number (systolic) represents the pressure when your heart beats, and the bottom (diastolic) represents the pressure when your heart rests between beats.

What does it mean when your blood pressure is high?

High blood pressure, or hypertension, means your blood is pushing against your artery walls with too much force. This puts extra strain on your heart and blood vessels, increasing your risk for serious health problems like heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

What your blood pressure numbers mean?

Blood pressure category	Systolic mm Hg (upper number)	Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	Less than 80
High blood pressure (hypertension) stage 1	130-139	80-89
High blood pressure stage 2	140 or higher	90 or higher
Hypertensive crisis	Higher than 180	Higher than 120



Talk with your doctor

- As an EUTF HMSA member, you're highly encouraged to visit your PCP at least once a year for a preventive checkup.
- This annual visit is a benefit available to you at no cost when seeing an in-network provider.
- If you have a PCP, make an appointment for an annual checkup to assess your overall health.
- If you don't have a PCP, go to hmsa.com/eutf and click Find a Doctor. Or call (808) 948-6499 or 1 (800) 776-4672.

Blood pressure benefit worksheet



These health plan benefits are available to you at no cost:

☐ Annual preventive checkup.

This annual checkup with your PCP will help assess your overall health. When you see a provider in the HMSA network, the checkup is available at no cost. If you don't have a PCP, go to hmsa.com/eutf and click Find a Doctor. Or call (808) 948-6499 or 1 (800) 776-4672.

☐ A dedicated health care team.

A team of health care professionals, registered dietitians, and health coaches can supplement the care you receive from your PCP. To learn more, call 1 (855) 329-5461, option 1, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Or visit hmsa.com/bloodpressure.

☐ Personalized care.

If you've been recently diagnosed with hypertension and have other chronic conditions, an HMSA representative from our health and well-being support team can help you better understand the benefits, programs, and health coaching that are available to EUTF members. Connect with an HMSA health coach to set nutrition, exercise, stress, and weight management goals customized just for you. Visit hmsa.com/well-being/health-coaching/. Enroll online or call 1 (855) 329-5461, option 1, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

☐ Referrals to behavioral health care providers.

Alleviate the stress of managing your health conditions. For behavioral health care providers, resources, and services, call (808) 695-7700 or 1 (855) 856-0578.

☐ Fun and interactive health education workshops.

Participate in our fitness, nutrition, stress management, or other health and well-being workshops at no cost. To find a workshop, go to hmsa.com/healtheducation. To register, call 1 (855) 329-5461, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

☐ Condition Care Program.

A personalized program that helps you manage ongoing health conditions with support from a local health care team.

Enroll online or call us at 1 (855) 329-5461, option 1, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or visit hmsa.com/well-being/condition-care-program.

Tips for lowering your blood pressure



Work with your PCP to determine the best treatment for you. Together, you can set goals to improve your blood pressure.

A healthy lifestyle is important to managing your blood pressure. A healthy lifestyle, which affects your physical and mental well-being, includes:

- Staying physically active.
- Eating a healthy diet.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Being tobacco free.
- Limiting alcohol.
- Managing stress.
- Having regular medical checkups with blood pressure checks.

Shake it up and move regularly!



Exercise can help prevent and lessen the effects of health conditions such as:

- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Excess weight
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Stress



Mindful movement such as yoga and tai chi can:

- Improve mood
- Manage depression
- Reduce stress and anxiety



Before you begin an exercise program, check with your PCP to determine what type of exercise and how much of it is safe for you.

- Choose activities that are fun.
- Exercise with a friend for support.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes.



Engage in moderate intensity exercise for 30 minutes or more at least five days a week.

- A moderately intense workout increases your heart rate and causes you to breathe harder, but you still should be able to talk comfortably.
- Try an exercise such as walking, cycling on flat terrain, water aerobics, or gardening.

For more information on physical activity guidelines for adults, check out [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and search for physical activity basics for adults.

DASH to good health

Want to stop hypertension the healthy way? There's a diet for that. The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension Diet (DASH) was created by the National Institutes of Health. It's a heart-healthy diet that doesn't require any fancy recipes or special foods.

To follow DASH, the American Heart Association recommends you focus on eating:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole grains.
- Low-fat dairy products.
- Skinless poultry and fish.
- Nuts and legumes.
- Non-tropical vegetable oils.
- Foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium, and fewer sugar-sweetened beverages.
- The leanest possible cuts of red meat.

Eat the rainbow

A colorful plate is a healthy plate. Luckily, there's a rainbow of fruits and vegetables so you can get your five servings daily, three of vegetables and two of fruits. Fresh produce is best, but if you can't go to the farmers market, frozen is a good second choice. Canned in water or in their own juices is a good third choice.



Chicken Avocado Salad

Ingredients

- 1 rotisserie chicken, deboned and shredded
- 1 15-oz. can of corn, drained
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 avocado, peeled, pitted, and diced
- ½ cup fresh basil
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 limes, juiced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Mix chicken, corn, tomatoes, avocado, and basil in a bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper. Toss gently. Makes 6 servings.



Keep a healthy weight

Obesity rates have been rising worldwide for the past decade. Excess weight is a common precursor to many health conditions, including high blood pressure and heart disease. In fact, when you gain weight, your blood pressure rises. Losing just 10 pounds can help bring it down

Steps to weight loss



1. Check with your PCP to see whether you need to lose weight.



2. If so, set a goal to lose 10% of your current weight.



3. Create a heart-healthy meal plan and stick to it.



4. Elevate your heart rate with 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least five times per week.



5. Break exercise into chunks. Try 10-15 minutes of brisk walking or stair climbing two to three times a day.



6. Check in once a week to see how you're doing.

Remember that healthy weight loss takes time. Losing one to two pounds per week is the recommended way to take it off and keep it off. Talk to your PCP before starting a new diet or exercise plan.

Understanding BMI: One piece of the puzzle

What is BMI?

Body mass index (BMI) is a simple number based on your height and weight. It's used as a general guide to help identify if you may be underweight, at a healthy weight, overweight, or obese.

But BMI doesn't tell the whole story. It doesn't measure muscle, bone, or fat distribution. That's why it's important to look at your total body composition and talk with your doctor about what's right for you.

Why it matters

A high BMI can be linked to higher risks for:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Stroke

But some people with a high BMI may still be healthy, especially if they have more muscle than fat. Others with a "normal" BMI may still be at risk if they carry excess fat around the waist.

Check your BMI online

Use a trusted calculator to check your BMI and learn what it means for your health:

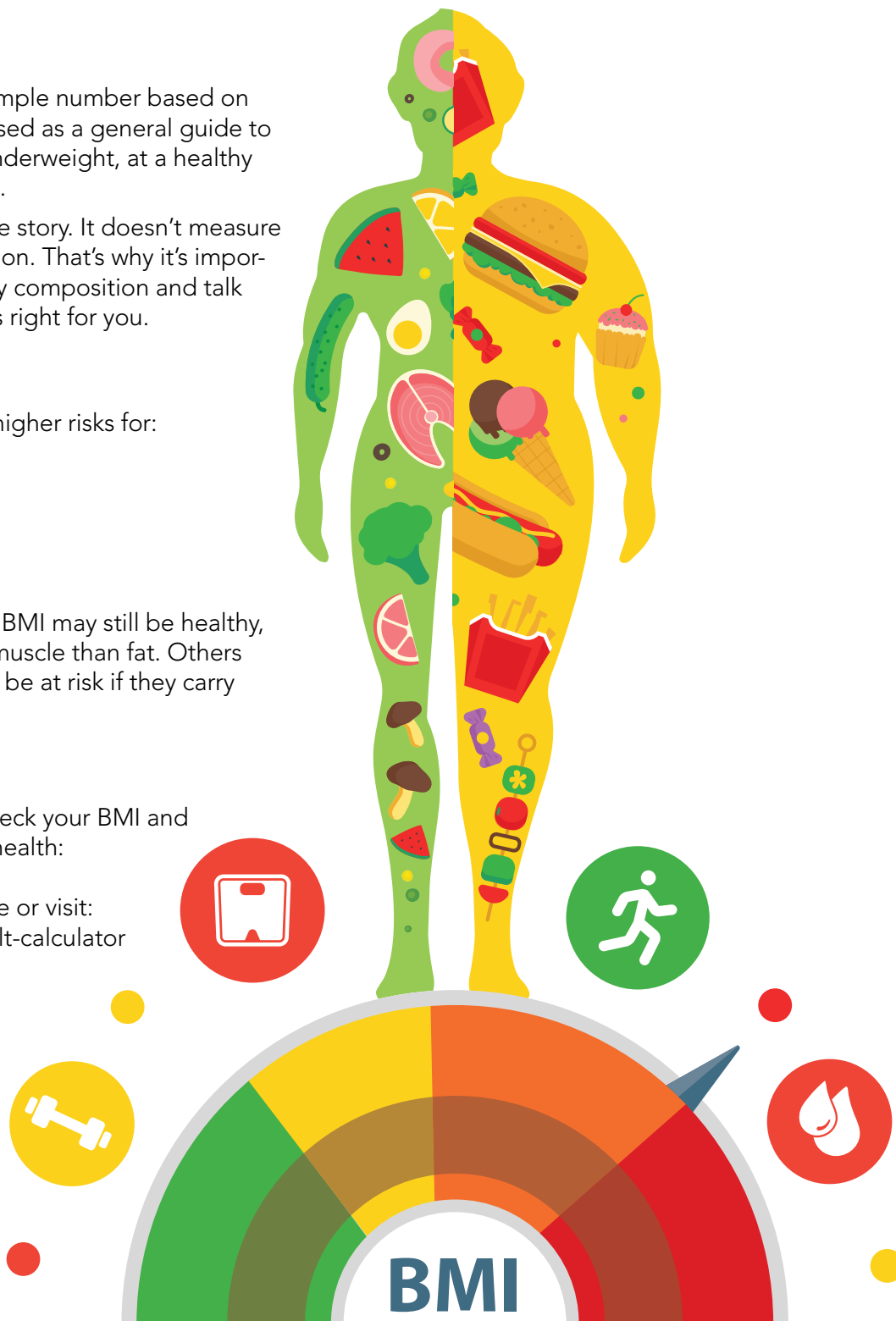


Scan this QR code or visit:
cdc.gov/bmi/adult-calculator

Talk to your doctor

Your doctor can help you understand your BMI in the context of your overall health, including:

- Waist size
- Muscle mass
- Blood pressure
- Lifestyle habits



Get the most from medications

Medications can help control high blood pressure, prevent complications like heart attack or stroke, and reduce the risk of heart disease. To be effective, they must be taken as prescribed. Taking medication in the wrong dose or at different times can be dangerous.

Let your doctor know about any new supplements or prescriptions you're taking in case they interact with your blood pressure medications. If you have questions about your medications, your pharmacist is a great resource.

Make sure you know:

- The names of your medications.
- The dosages.
- How often to take them.
- The possible side effects.
- Whether the medications may interact with other drugs you take or with certain foods or beverages.
- What to do if you miss a dose.
- Your blood pressure. Take a reading regularly to help your doctor know how well your medications are working.

Download a My Medicines form at

hmsa.com/content/assets/hmsa-medication-tracker.pdf



How many of these tips have you tried to remember to take your medications?

At home:

- Take your medications exactly as prescribed at the same time every day. Set an alarm or download a reminder app on your smartphone.
- Use a pill box to organize your daily medications. Put it in a place that you access as part of your daily routine, like next to your toothbrush, next to the coffee maker, or on your nightstand.
- Write down when you're scheduled to take your medications on a calendar or wallet card. Place a reminder note where you can't miss it, like on the refrigerator or your bathroom mirror.
- Order refills one week before you run out to ensure timely refill approvals from your provider.
- If you're eligible, use a mail-order service to have your medications delivered directly to your home or post office box.

At the pharmacy:

- Sign up for automatic refills.
- Ask your pharmacist if your prescription refills can be synchronized to avoid multiple trips to the pharmacy.
- Ask your pharmacist if your medication can be sorted into dosing packs.
- Request a three-month supply to maximize your plan benefits.

Blood pressure action plan

Patient name: _____ Date: _____

PCP: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____

Take this form to your next appointment with your PCP. Together, you and your doctor can create a blood pressure goal and develop a plan to achieve it.

Medication management

List all the medications you currently take. Your PCP can review this list and help you determine if changes are needed. Tell your doctor if you have problems with any medication.

Name of medication (e.g., metoprolol)	How much to take (e.g., 100 mg)	When to take it (e.g., once daily in the morning)	What is it for (e.g., lower blood pressure)

Blood pressure monitoring

It's important to check your blood pressure regularly. A blood pressure reading consists of two numbers – systolic (the top number) and diastolic (the bottom number). Systolic pressure is created when the heart pumps blood. Diastolic pressure is created when the heart is at rest between beats.

Normal blood pressure 120/80 or less

Prehypertension 120-139/80-89

High blood pressure 140/90 or higher

My blood pressure goal is: Date:

Date/time	Reading		Comments
	Blood pressure	Heart rate (pulse)	
	/		
	/		
	/		
	/		

Contact your PCP if either number exceeds:

Systolic

Diastolic

Blood pressure action plan (continued)

Controlling sodium

Sodium increases blood pressure because it holds excess fluid in the body. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods such as canned soup, lunch meat, fast food, pickles, ham, and chips. Read food labels to see which foods are high in sodium and avoid those foods or eat small amounts. Also, add salt in moderation when cooking or eating. Ask your PCP how much sodium you should consume per day.

Here are three high-sodium foods that I can cut back on right now:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Losing weight

Small changes in your diet can make a big difference to your weight. Losing five pounds can help lower your blood pressure.

Current weight:

My weight	In three months	In six months	In 12 months
Date			
Weight			

Here are four things I can do right now to lose weight:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Activity planning

Exercising most days of the week for at least 30 minutes a day can help lower your blood pressure. You can break up a day's exercise into three 10-minute segments. Good activities are walking and swimming.

Here are three things I can do right now to be more active:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Smoking, alcohol, and stress

Quitting smoking may be the most important thing you can do to lower your blood pressure. You'll also reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

I currently smoke packs/or cigarettes per day.

Goal: Reduce to packs/or cigarettes per day.

Goal: Quit by (date)

☐ I don't smoke.

Alcohol can increase risk factors associated with hypertension, such as weight gain and elevated blood glucose levels, and can interfere with medications. Decreasing alcohol consumption can help you keep your blood pressure in check.

Goal: Limit amount of alcohol to drink(s) each week.

☐ I don't drink.

Our bodies release hormones that increase our blood pressure when we're stressed. Chronic stress can lead to hypertension over time. Reducing stress is good for your mental and physical health.

To reduce stress, I will _____.

Additional resources



- **HMSA**
hmsa.com/bloodpressure
- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
cdc.gov/bloodpressure
- **American Heart Association**
heart.org/bloodpressure
- **Hawaii Health Initiative**
livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/blood-pressure/

Blood pressure monitors are available at your doctor's office, fire stations, and HMSA Centers.

Serving you

Meet with knowledgeable, experienced health plan advisers. We'll answer questions about your health plan, give you general health and well-being information, and more. Hours of operation may change. Please go to hmsa.com/contact before your visit.

HMSA Center in Honolulu

818 Keeaumoku St.

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

HMSA Center in Pearl City

Pearl City Gateway | 1132 Kuala St., Suite 400

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

HMSA Center in Hilo

Waiakea Center | 303A E. Makaala St.

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

HMSA Center in Kahului

Puunene Shopping Center | 70 Hookele St., Suite 1220

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

HMSA Center in Lihue

Kuhio Medical Center | 3-3295 Kuhio Highway, Suite 202

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Contact HMSA. We're here with you.

Call (808) 948-6079 or 1 (800) 776-4672.

hmsa.com

     @hmsahawaii

Together, we improve the lives of our members and the health of Hawaii.
Caring for our families, friends, and neighbors is our privilege.



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