

Monthly Health Campaigns

February 2018 - Keep It Down!

February 13, 2018



What's going on

Having high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) is more common than you think. It is estimated that about 75 million Americans have high blood pressure, yet 1 in 5 adults don't even know they have it. When the pressure of the blood in your vessels rises or is too high, you may not have any symptoms. And hypertension can occur slowly over time. The best way to reduce the risk of heart disease, heart attack and stroke is to check your blood pressure on a regular basis.

Danger zone

Knowing the risk factors for high blood pressure is a good first step to guard against heart disease. Family history, age, gender and race can all play a part in whether you develop high blood pressure. It is always important to know if your parents or siblings have high blood pressure or other conditions. Unfortunately, you can't control hereditary factors. Talking with your doctor about your family health history is vital to your overall health.

Just beat it

Luckily, there are lifestyle-related risk factors you can control. Lowering your blood pressure might be as easy as:

Maintaining a healthy weight Being active Limiting salt and alcohol intake Eliminating tobacco use

Your lifestyle choices can have a direct impact on your blood pressure. Being overweight puts a strain on your heart and could increase your chances for other health issues, such as diabetes. Adding more fresh fruits and vegetables to your diet can aid in weight loss and help prevent heart disease. Lowering your sodium intake and staying away from foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol is a good idea, too.

If you smoke — quit as soon as possible. Smoking damages your arteries as well as your lungs. Reduce your alcohol intake. Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure and cause many other heart-related issues like irregular heartbeat and heart failure. And finally, exercise is a key to good heart health. Lowering your blood pressure can be as simple as taking a brisk walk three times a week. These lifestyle changes can help you get your blood pressure under control and they might just save your life.