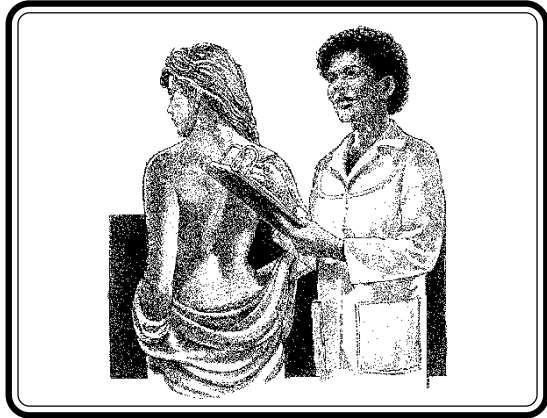


# Your Health: Taking Control

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



## CONTROLLING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

### Changes That Can Help

Because there is no cure for most high blood pressure, there's no such thing as a quick treatment that solves the problem. It usually takes a few weeks or months for the doctor to work out the best way to control your blood pressure. Some ways are: medications, exercise, stress control, quitting smoking, weight loss for the overweight, and limiting sodium

### Exercise

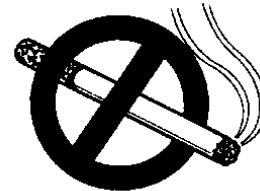
Exercise can improve blood pressure. However, if you have high blood pressure check with your physician before starting an exercise program. Your doctor will help you choose what exercise is right for your age and physical condition.

### Stress

Stress can increase blood pressure in some people. Talk with your doctor about stress management classes.

### Smoking

Nicotine stimulates the release of compounds in the body which increase blood pressure. Talk with your doctor about smoking cessation classes.



### Weight Loss

Weight loss can lower blood pressure for some people. Weight loss is one of the best and safest ways to lower blood pressure. Weight loss can produce four times the drop in blood pressure as lowering sodium intake. Proper weight loss comes from a combination of diet and exercise.

### Limiting Sodium

While perhaps only one-third of people with hypertension are sodium-sensitive, the dietary guideline to use sodium in moderation is good advice. Most Americans consume more sodium than they need. Since salt is 40% sodium, one of the best ways to limit your intake of sodium is to lower salt intake. Some people can use salt substitutes to lower their sodium intake. However, for people with certain medical conditions, salt substitutes can be harmful. Ask your doctor before you use salt substitutes.

### Increasing Potassium or Calcium

For some people increasing their intake of food rich in potassium or calcium may help lower blood pressure. However, this usually cannot be used as a long term treatment.

### **Suggested Readings:**

Oklahoma State University Extension Fact Sheets:

T-3159, *Diet and Hypertension*

T-3138, *Dietary Fiber*

T-3142, *Dietary Salt*

T-3153, *Facts About Fat*

T-3165, *Food Guide Pyramid: Guide to Daily Food Choices*

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*This material is supported by the Oklahoma  
Nutrition Education (ONE) Program through  
the Oklahoma Department of Human Services  
Food Stamp Program.*

Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture,  
State and Local Governments cooperating. Oklahoma Coop-  
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