



HEART HEALTH

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February is American Heart Month!

Set Goals for a Healthy Year!

Start the New Year by focusing on heart health. Think about the habits you want to change in your life. Then set goals and make heart healthy changes such as eating healthy foods, being physically active, and aiming for a healthy weight. To be successful, choose goals that are realistic and specific.

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the inside of your blood vessels. The pumping of the heart creates this force. Blood pressure is written as two numbers such as 120/80. The top number – systolic pressure – measures the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats. The bottom number – diastolic pressure – measures the pressure in the blood vessels when your heart is at rest between beats. Both numbers are important. When either of these numbers is too high, there is too much strain on your heart and blood vessels.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80. Blood pressure of 140/90 or higher over a period of time is considered high. This is also known as hypertension. Blood pressure between 120/80 and 139/89 is known as prehypertension. If your blood pressure is in this range, you are more likely to develop hypertension unless you take action to prevent it.

There are usually no signs or symptoms of high blood pressure, so it is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly by a health professional. High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke and also is a serious risk for heart disease.

How Can You Prevent or Control High Blood Pressure?

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Follow a healthy eating plan that includes foods low in salt and fat, high in calcium and fruits and vegetables.
- Be physically active each day.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks a day for men.
- Do not smoke and avoid other people’s tobacco smoke.
- Know what your blood pressure is and work to keep it at a healthy level.
- If you take medication for blood pressure, follow your doctor’s instructions.
- Keep track of your numbers by recording your weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar often.

Blood Pressure Facts:

- Family History – High blood pressure tends to run in families.
- Race – High blood pressure occurs more often in blacks than in any other racial group. High blood pressure in blacks usually develops at an earlier age than it does in whites and is more likely to lead to serious health problems such as stroke or heart attack.
- Age – Your risk of high blood pressure increases as you get older. Those who do not have high blood pressure at age 55 face a 90 percent chance of developing it during their lifetime.
- Gender – In young adulthood and early middle age, high blood pressure is more common in men than in women. After the age of 60, high blood pressure is more common in women.



February 6th is National Wear Red Day!

February 6th is the day when Americans nationwide wear red to show their support for women’s heart disease awareness.

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