

## You're in Control!

### Lowering High Blood Pressure

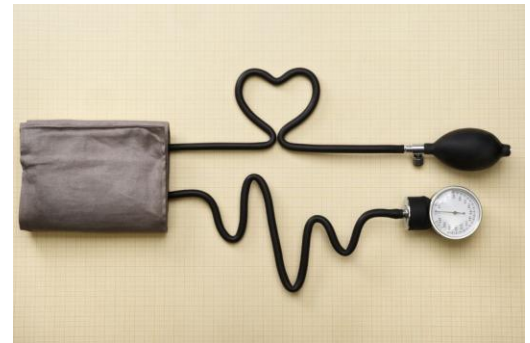
Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a silent killer in this country. One in three Americans have it. And because it has no symptoms, many people with hypertension aren't aware of their condition.

#### Why is controlling blood pressure so important?

When blood pressure is elevated, the heart is under enormous strain. It becomes overworked and can lead to:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Congestive heart failure
- Kidney disease
- Blindness

Got your attention? The good news, according to the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, is that "hypertension can almost always be prevented." How? Making simple lifestyle changes can greatly reduce your risks and keep those blood pressure levels in check.



#### 6 Ways to Lower Your Blood Pressure

- Maintain a healthy body weight (consult a fitness specialist to determine what a healthy weight means for you).
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat foods low in sodium. Excess salt equals hypertension risk.
- Skip (or reduce) the alcohol.
- Follow a healthy diet, such as the DASH diet (see below).
- Take any medications as prescribed.

#### The DASH Diet

The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) is a way of eating promoted by the U.S.-based National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. The diet provides food group guidelines and recommends consuming less than 1,500 mg/day of sodium. The DASH diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods, specifically allows for:

- Grains: 7-8 daily servings
- Vegetables: 4-5 daily servings
- Fruits: 4-5 daily servings
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy products: 2-3 daily servings
- Meat, poultry and fish: 2 or less daily servings
- Nuts, seeds, and dry beans: 4-5 servings per week
- Fats and oils: 2-3 daily servings
- Sweets: less than 5 servings per week