
Heart Health : High Blood Pressure

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

High blood pressure is deadly -- but there are ways to control it.

There are no obvious symptoms of high blood pressure

You could have high blood pressure and not know it, because for many people there are no obvious symptoms. This is why high blood pressure is often called the "silent killer". The only way to tell if you have it is to have your blood pressure checked. We recommend you do it regularly; with a doctor or qualified health professional checking it for you.

The first sign can be a heart attack or stroke

Most people don't realize that high blood pressure can kill them. They think it's just a warning sign of worse things to come. But every hour you live with uncontrolled high blood pressure, it damages your heart, your brain and your kidneys. This damage can mean for some people the first sign of high blood pressure is a heart attack or stroke.

It's very common in Ontario

One in six people in Ontario have high blood pressure, and that number goes up to one in four over the age of 45. Most at risk are people with a family history of high blood pressure. Those who smoke or drink heavily. Those who have diabetes. And those who are overweight, or inactive. Even so, you can be

very fit and healthy, and still have high blood pressure, which is why it's so important to have your blood pressure checked regularly. And to keep it under control.

There are ways to prevent it - or control it

Because high blood pressure causes permanent damage, you should do everything possible to avoid it. If you have it, you should do everything you can to keep it under control.

The fact is that you can live a longer, healthier life if you prevent high blood pressure, and you could reduce your risk of having a stroke by 40%.

The best way to prevent high blood pressure is to live a healthy lifestyle by: not smoking, maintaining a healthy body weight, staying active and avoiding alcohol. A healthy lifestyle is also a vital factor in controlling high blood pressure once you've been diagnosed with it. Medication (with a healthy lifestyle) can help to bring it under control, but only if you keep taking it as the doctor prescribes.

Your Blood Pressure Action Plan lets you take control

To help you prevent or control high blood pressure, just contact the Heart and Stroke Foundation for *Your Blood Pressure Action Plan*.TM

Answer some questions about yourself and your lifestyle, and your personalized plan will identify the key things you can do to control your blood pressure and improve your health. Real, achievable things that are personal to you. And could help save your life.

Call free **1-888-473-4636** or visit The Heart and Stroke Foundation Web site.

Government of Ontario

For information about health services and resources :

www.health.gov.on.ca

For consumer-friendly health tips and information :

www.HealthyOntario.com

INFOline: 1-877-234-4343;

TTY: 1-800-387-5559

Telehealth Ontario:

1-866-797-0000; TTY 1-866-797-0007

INFOline is open during business hours and can provide general information on healthcare.

Telehealth Ontario is a 24/7 service which uses nurse practitioners to answer your immediate health concerns.