



Know the Facts: **What is high blood pressure?**

High blood pressure (hypertension) is called the “silent killer” because there are usually no symptoms. People with hypertension often feel fine. The only way to know if you have hypertension is to have your blood pressure checked regularly.

What are the risk factors for high blood pressure?

There are two types of risk factors for developing hypertension: those you can control and those you cannot control.

Risk factors that can be controlled:

- **Weight.** Being overweight increases your risk for high blood pressure.
- **Eating habits.** Too much salt, processed foods, and high fat foods increase your risk for heart disease and high blood pressure
- **Smoking habits.** Tobacco use can cause high blood pressure and also increase your risk for heart attack and stroke.
- **Activity level.** Not getting enough daily activity or exercise increases chances of becoming overweight and getting high blood pressure.
- **Alcohol use.** Heavy regular use of alcohol can cause high blood pressure.

Risk factors that cannot be controlled:

- **Race.** African Americans have high blood pressure more often than other races.
- **Family history.** If your parents or other family members have high blood pressure, then you are at increased risk to develop high blood pressure.
- **Age.** Risk for having high blood pressure increases with age.

How can I control my blood pressure?

Make healthy lifestyle changes that can reduce your risk for high blood pressure and improve your overall health.

- **Quit smoking.** Talk to your healthcare provider for ideas on how to quit smoking. You can also call the Wyoming QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or call the **Healthy Together!** program at 1-888-545-1710 to speak with a Health Coach about ways to quit.
- **Have your blood pressure checked regularly.** Your healthcare provider will check it or you can check it yourself at your pharmacy or discount store.
- **Change your eating habits.** Eat foods lower in salt; avoid processed or prepared food which are usually very high in sodium; and choose lean meats, whole grain breads and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- **Get active.** Regular exercise can help lower blood pressure and help you lose weight. Walking is a great way to get active. Your healthcare provider can help you find an exercise program that is right for you.



Because there are often no symptoms for high blood pressure, you must have your blood pressure checked regularly.

- **Lose weight and keep it off.** Losing just 10 pounds can actually help lower your blood pressure. To get started on weight loss, increase your daily activities and eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- **Control stress.** Try relaxation techniques, breathing exercises or daily exercise to help when you feel stressed.
- **Limit alcohol intake.** Your healthcare provider may recommend decreasing or avoiding alcohol.

Resources: American Heart Association website <<http://www.americanheart.org>> and FDA office of Women's Health website <<http://www.fda.gov/womens>>

**Call 1-888-545-1710 to speak to a nurse 24-hours a day
or visit www.WYHealthyTogether.com**

Disclaimer: Information or education provided in this fact sheet is not intended to replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. The information provided on this fact sheet is not all-inclusive of this topic.

Healthy Together! is offered by the Wyoming Department of Health to all Wyoming EqualityCare clients at no cost. The program provides one-on-one support from a nurse, educational materials to encourage the self-management of health and assistance in coordinating care among multiple providers. **Healthy Together!** also provides EqualityCare clients with information on weight loss, smoking cessation, and how to adopt healthy lifestyles. **Healthy Together!** was named the Best Government Disease Management Program by the Disease Management Association of America in 2005.