

# HEART HEALTH MATTERS

Wellness Newsletter



## Heart Health

### A Heart Under Pressure

Heart disease is the number one killer for both men and women in the U.S. The month of February is dedicated to bringing awareness to heart disease and what Americans can do to prevent developing heart disease. Nearly 1 in 2 Americans have high blood pressure. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke. Blood pressure is the measure of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. Over time, high blood pressure damages the arteries and can cause conditions where they weaken or clog. The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association released new guidelines in 2017 to define hypertension and when intervention should be made. The new guidelines lower the definition of high blood pressure to allow for earlier intervention.

- + Normal: less than 120/80 mmHg
- + Elevated: systolic between 120-129 and diastolic less than 80
- + Stage 1: systolic between 130-139 and diastolic between 80-89
- + Stage 2: systolic at least 140 or diastolic at least 90
- + Hypertensive crisis: systolic over 180 and/or diastolic over 120

Since high blood pressure affects so many Americans it has created a large economic burden, costing \$46.8 billion in healthcare costs, medications and loss of productivity. The Surgeon General has made it one of their Healthy People 2020 goal to reduce the number of Americans with hypertension. To lower your risk for heart disease and hypertension, practice the following healthy habits:

- + Eat a healthy diet including fresh fruits and vegetables and limiting the amount of sodium
- + Maintain a healthy weight
- + Get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week
- + Do not smoke
- + Limit the amount of alcohol you consume
- + Get enough sleep

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**Nearly 90% of Americans exceed their daily intake of sodium, which increases their risk of hypertension.**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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## High Blood Pressure and Stroke

High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke. Nearly 87% of strokes are caused by narrowed and clogged arteries. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel to the brain is either blocked by a clot (ischemic stroke) or bursts (hemorrhagic stroke) causing that part of the brain to no longer receive blood and oxygen. Having a stroke can cause long-term damage and serious speech and movement disabilities or even death. The best thing you can do to lower your blood pressure and therefore lower your risk of stroke, is to adopt healthy lifestyle changes.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), American Heart Association (2016)

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### Want to Learn More?

Make an appointment with your Healthstat clinician to discuss what you can do to lower your risk for heart disease.



## Know Your Numbers

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