

Discharge Information: High Blood Pressure



You were treated in the hospital for blood pressure that was too high (hypertension).

This handout tells you and your caregiver what you need to know about your care in the first weeks at home. Ask your doctor or nurse if there are things you do not understand.

Follow-Up Appointments

Name of Doctor	Date & Time	Phone Number
1.		
2.		
3.		



Eating Plan

Follow the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan to lower blood pressure.

- Limit the amount of salt (sodium) you eat.
- Eat 6 to 8 servings a day of cereal, bread, and grains.
- Eat 4 to 5 servings a day of vegetables and fruits.
- Eat 2 to 3 servings a day of fat free and low fat milk products.
- Eat 4 to 5 servings a week of nuts, seeds, and dry beans.
- Limit lean meat, chicken, and fish to no more than 2 servings a day.
- Limit foods high in fats and oils to no more than 3 servings a day.
- Limit your sweets to less than 5 servings per week.

Check with your doctor about how much salt (sodium) you can have to cut down:

- Do not add salt to food. Talk to your doctor before using salt substitutes.
- Choose fresh food to eat.
- Avoid high sodium foods.
 1. Read food labels to see how much sodium a food has per serving.
 2. Do not eat a lot of fast food.
 3. Foods high in sodium are canned foods, frozen pizza and frozen dinners, deli meats, and salty snacks.

Some medicines cause you to have too little potassium in your blood. To get more potassium, eat potatoes, yogurt, green leafy vegetables, beans, whole grains, chicken, fish, bananas, and oranges.

Read the “Nutrition Facts” panel on packaged foods to see if that food is a healthy choice. Look at the amounts of total calories, fat, sodium, and other nutrients per serving.

- Many packages have more than 1 serving.
- If you eat more than 1 serving, multiply the nutrition amounts by the number of servings. This will tell you what nutrition amounts you are really eating.



Activity

Talk to the doctor about what exercise is best for you and make it part of your day.

Get at least 30 minutes of exercise 3 to 5 days a week. Choose moderate types of exercise such as walking, biking, swimming, or stair climbing.

Do not drive or return to work until your doctor says it is OK.



Self-Care

Keep all doctor appointments.

Talk to your doctor about your target blood pressure range. Work to keep it at this level.

Make changes to help keep your blood pressure in control.

- Check your blood pressure every day.
 - Wait 30 minutes after exercise before you take your blood pressure.
 - Take your blood pressure in the same arm each time.
 - Write down your blood pressure reading in a diary to show your doctor.
- Take your medicine.
- Be at a healthy weight.

Let your doctor know if you have trouble breathing at night while you sleep.

If you smoke, you should stop now. Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.



Medicine

When you leave the hospital, you should get:

- A list of all the medicines you should take
- Prescriptions for any new medicines

Take your medicine as your doctor asked you to:

- Talk to your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Include your prescription medicines, and vitamins, herbs, and medicines you buy at the store.
- Take the medicine list to every doctor or hospital visit.
- Get the follow-up tests that your doctor orders.

These programs help you pay for prescription medicines if you cannot afford them.

- NeedyMeds. Go to: www.needymeds.org
- Partnership for Prescription Assistance. Go to: www.pparx.org or call 1.888.477.2669.



When to Call for Emergency Help

You show signs of heart or blood vessel problems.

- You have sudden chest pain that moves to your jaw, arms, or between your shoulder blades.
- You feel stabbing, squeezing, or tightness in your chest.
- There is a heavy feeling in your chest as if someone is sitting on you.
- Your chest pain does not go away when you rest or take chest pain medicine.
- You feel like you are choking or cannot get air.
- Your lips, nose area, or nails turn blue or gray.
- Your heart feels like it is beating hard, or your heartbeat is not regular.
- You have numbness or tingling in one or both arms.

You have signs of a possible stroke.

- Numbness, weakness, or problems moving on one side of the body
- Trouble speaking, slurred speech, or speech that does not make sense
- A sudden very bad headache with no known cause

You have a seizure (body shaking, staring, eyes rolling).

You are overly sleepy or find it hard to wake up.

You cannot urinate.



When to Call Your Regular Doctor

You have a fever over 100.4 or chills.

Your blood pressure is higher or lower than it should be.

You have other medical problems.



Learn More

- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute - National Institutes of Health.
Go to: www.nhlbi.nih.gov
- American Heart Association. Go to: www.heart.org
- National Institutes of Health. Go to: www.smokefree.gov

This information is general in nature and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you might have. This information sheet is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Signatures

Patient or Caregiver

Signature

Date

Nurse

Signature

Date

