



Daily care for your condition - Hypertension

This handout tells you what you need to do to care for your hypertension and work with your doctor to stay healthy.



Follow your self-care plan.

- The self-care plan is a list of what you need to do every day to manage your hypertension.
- It tells you the signs that your condition is getting worse and when to take action right away.
- Ask your doctor or nurse if there are things you do not understand.
- Make and keep all doctor visits.



Take your medicine as your doctor told you.

- Know why you take each medicine.
- Know the medicine side effects to watch out for.
- Know what to do if you miss a dose.
- Keep a list of all the medicine you take to show your doctor.



Do health checks at home.

- You may need to 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.
- Follow a plan if your blood pressure is too high or low. **Seek medical care right away if:**

- It goes higher than _____ / _____.
- It goes lower than _____ / _____.
- Know your target blood pressure range. Work to keep it at this level.
 - The top number (systolic) can range from _____ to _____.
 - The bottom number (diastolic) can range from _____ to _____.
- You may need to check your heart rate every day.
 - Sit quietly for 10 minutes before you start.
 - Place 2 fingers lightly on the artery on the inside of your wrist. Do not use your thumb.
 - Using a clock or watch with a second hand, count the beats you feel for 60 seconds.
 - Write down your heart rate in a diary to show your doctor.



Follow the eating plan as your doctor told you.

- You may need to follow a heart healthy eating plan.
 - Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
 - Choose foods low in fat.
 - Limit the amount of salt (sodium) you eat.
- Talk to your doctor about what you should eat.
 - Calorie needs are based on my activity level and the need to gain or lose weight.
 - I should eat _____ calories a day.
 - I can have _____ mg of salt (sodium) a day.
- Know how food can affect your medicine.

- 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.



Take steps for a healthy lifestyle.

- Keep active and exercise.
- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Do not smoke.
- Get a flu shot (vaccine) each year.



Know the signs that your condition is getting worse.

- Know when to call for emergency help.
 - You think you are having a heart attack or stroke.
 - You have very bad breathing problems.
- Know when to call your doctor.
 - See the **When to get help - Hypertension** handout.

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.

Patient or Caregiver:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Nurse:

Signature: _____ Date: _____