



Let's Talk About...

Blood Pressure

We may know a lot about blood pressure and may have even been diagnosed with hypertension (High Blood Pressure or HBP). However, there may be a few of us out there who could be experiencing higher than normal blood pressure and not even know it.

High blood pressure often has no symptoms.

However, over time and if untreated, it can cause health conditions, such as heart disease and stroke.

So what can you do to prevent and know the signs and symptoms that your blood pressure may be increasing?

First, let's address the signs and symptoms.

High blood pressure is largely symptomless, which is why it's nicknamed the "silent killer." If you ignore your blood pressure because you think a certain symptom or sign will alert you to the problem, you are taking a dangerous chance with your life.

DO NOT attempt to diagnose yourself with HBP. Clinical diagnosis should only be made by a healthcare professional. Know your blood pressure and make changes that matter to protect your health.

The American Heart Association goes on to address a variety of symptoms that may be indirectly related to, but are NOT always caused by, high blood pressure:

Blood spots in the eyes: Blood spots in the eyes are more common in people with diabetes or high blood pressure, but neither condition causes blood spots. Floaters in the eyes are also not related to HBP.

However, an eye doctor may be able to detect damage to the optic nerve caused by untreated HBP.

Facial flushing: Facial flushing occurs when blood vessels in the face dilate. It can occur unpredictably or in response to certain triggers, emotional stress, exposure to heat or hot water, alcohol consumption and exercise — all of which can raise blood pressure temporarily.

Dizziness: While dizziness can be a side effect of some blood pressure medications, it is not caused by HBP. However, dizziness should not be ignored, especially if the onset is sudden. Sudden dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, and trouble walking are all warning signs of a stroke. HBP is a leading risk factor for stroke.

Next, let's address how to prevent high blood pressure.

There are a number of factors and variables that can put you at a greater risk for developing [high blood pressure](#). Understanding these factors can help you be more aware of how likely you are to develop HBP. Some risk factors like family history, age, gender, race, & chronic kidney disease are not preventable. However, there are many modifiable risk factors that you CAN control for better overall heart health!

Move your body. Physical activity is great for your heart and circulatory system in general, and blood pressure is no exception. Not getting enough physical activity as part of your lifestyle increases your risk of getting high blood pressure.

Variety in how you fuel your body. Good nutrition from a variety of sources is critical for your health. Our body can only manage so much salt and sodium. Consuming more than our body can handle can lead to high blood pressure. Whole, healthful foods can help lower blood pressure.

Weight. Carrying too much weight puts an extra strain on your heart and circulatory system that can cause serious health problems. It also increases your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and HBP.

Regular, heavy use of alcohol can cause many health problems, including [heart failure](#), [stroke](#) and an irregular heartbeat. It can cause your blood pressure to increase dramatically and can also increase your risk of cancer, obesity, alcoholism, suicide and accidents.

Sleep. Sleep is always a good thing. Sleep apnea is something to be aware of when it comes to HBP. Obstructive [sleep apnea](#) may increase risk of developing HBP.

Cholesterol. More than half of people with HBP also have [high cholesterol](#).

Blood Sugar Levels/Diabetes. Most people with [diabetes](#) also develop HBP.

Smoking and tobacco use. Using tobacco can cause your blood pressure to temporarily increase and can contribute to damaged arteries.

Stress Too much stress may contribute to increased blood pressure. Also, stress can encourage behaviors that increase blood pressure, such as poor diet, physical inactivity, and using tobacco or drinking alcohol more than usual.

Bottom line...know your blood pressure, know and listen to your body, and take care of your heart health!



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DECEMBER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Events are offered at no cost and require reservations (unless otherwise noted). Reservations can be made in our app and online at fcymca.org.

BINGO

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4th from 12:15 – 1:15pm, Studio A

Join us for an afternoon shouting your favorite word—BINGO! We will have prizes for winners, fun with friends, and lots of laughs. **Wear your best ugly Christmas sweater!**

GUIDED MEDITATION: SOUND BATH

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7th from 9:00 – 10:00am, Baptist Wellness Center

Enjoy an hour of meditation with a Sound Bath. Please see Keith at the Baptist Wellness Center for more information and to sign-up.

NAVIGATING GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10th from 12:30 – 1:30pm, Studio B

Find a community of people who understand and learn to navigate your grief during the holidays.

BOWLING AND BIRTHDAYS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18th from 12:15 – 2:15pm

King Pins Bowling Center at 5310 Lenox Avenue

Get out and knock over some pins. You get shoes, two games, and a hotdog lunch for \$8.50. We will also be celebrating December birthdays. ***Sign up in the app or online. Payment can be made at the Bowling Alley.**

SOCIAL: HOLIDAY DESSERT/COOKIE EXCHANGE...FROM MY HOUSE TO YOURS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19th from 12:30 – 2:00pm, Studio A

Bring your favorite dessert or cookies to swap with others. Sign-up to bring a dish at the Welcome Center.

WALKING CLUB

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21st from 12:15 – 1:00pm, Outside

Enjoy the fall weather with a walk around our nature trail. **Wear red.**

SAFETY SEMINAR: HEALTHY AGING SELF-DEFENSE

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28th from 12:00 – 12:45pm, Studio A

Focus on flexibility, awareness and balance. Learn how to protect yourself in dangerous situations.

ARTS and CRAFTS: QUILTING FOR BEGINNERS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30th from 12:30 – 2:00pm, KidZone

Start making a quilt and continue the one you already started.

Don't forget your PUNCH!

TEN punches on your 50 & Better punch card(s) enters you to win YMCA swag!
Pick up your card at the Welcome Center today!