



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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BROOKS FAMILY YMCA | 10423 Centurion Parkway North | 904.854.2000 | DECEMBER 2024

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.**

Bible Study

Every Friday, 11:45am-12:45pm, Studio D

Once a week reading of the Holy Bible, led by Healthy Living Director Vince Cangelosi.

Healthy Aging Volunteer Meeting

Thursday, December 5, 2:15pm, Studio D

Interested in volunteering? Come to the meeting to find out what's happening and ask questions!

Bocce Ball

Wednesday, December 11th, 11:45am - 12:45pm, Studio B

Come enjoy a fun time learning a new game and getting gentle exercise, either standing OR using a chair!

Board Games

Wednesday, December 11th, 2:15 - 3:15pm, Studio D

Get ready for some fun! Many games are available! Meet new friends in a relaxing atmosphere. All supplies provided, or bring your own.

Game Day: Active Games

Wednesday, December 11th, 3:15 - 4:15pm, Conference Room

Ladder Toss, Electronic Darts, and Safety Axe Throwing!

Lunch Bunch

Monday, December 16th, 12:30 - 2:00pm

Meet at **Fogo de Chao, Town Center**, for food, friendship, and fun! \$18, not including tip. (Each participant will be responsible for paying for their own lunch.)

Book Club: Books@Brooks

Tuesday, December 17th, 12:30 - 2:00pm, Cheddar's, Town Center

Join us for lunch to celebrate the end of a wonderful, book-filled year! (Each participant will be responsible for paying for their own lunch.)

BINGO!

Friday, December 20th, 12:15 - 1:15pm, Conference Room

Sponsored by **David Palmeri**, Independent Insurance Agent. Publix gift card prizes!

New Member Orientation for Seniors

Wednesday, December 31, 2:15 - 3:15pm, Studio D

Ask questions, learn about program offerings, and get help with tech difficulties involving the Y App!

GriefShare: Resumes January 7

Tuesdays, January 7 - April 8, 2:00 - 4:00pm, Conference Room

For help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend. This supportive meeting is open to the community. **Registration info:** mychurchseniors@yahoo.com

Don't forget your PUNCH!

TEN punches on your 50 & Better punch card enters you to win a \$50 Publix gift card!

Pick up your card at the Welcome Center today!

Hello! My name is Sheri Nash, and I'm the Healthy Aging Coordinator at the Brooks YMCA. I plan our social events, and I'm always looking for inspiration and ideas! Let me know if you have any suggestions or feedback! Email: snash@fcymca.org Phone: 904.902.7973



Scan here to quickly register for an event.

