



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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# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO FEEL GREAT.

DYE CLAY FAMILY YMCA | 3322 Moody Avenue | 904.272.4304 | 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](http://fcymca.org).**

### **Walking Club**

**Tuesday, December 3rd, 9:00 - 9:45am, meet in the Lobby**

Meet Alison for walking and fun conversation. This is a brisk, 2 mile walk that will get your heart pumping!

### **Bible Study: Growing Older and Wiser Week 2**

**Tuesday, December 3rd, 11:15am - 12:15pm, Youth Center**

In this nine-session LifeGuide® Bible Study, Dale and Sandy Larsen help you discover the Bible's perspective on aging. You'll discover how God can effectively and powerfully use those who have grown wiser with the passing years. All denominations are welcome.

### **Arts and Crafts: Tote Bag Decorating**

**Tuesday, December 10th, 11:15am - 12:30pm, Youth Center**

Have fun and show us your creativity, while we decorate a canvas tote bag!

### **Coffee and Conversation**

**Friday, December 13th, 9:30 - 10:30am, Welcome Center**

Join Renee to meet new friends and share what you might like to be added to the Y's 50 and Better program.

### **Social: Cookie Exchange**

**Friday, December 13th, 11:15am - 12:30pm, Youth Center**

Bring your favorite cookies and the recipe to share! Also, we recommend bringing an extra storage container to take cookies home with you!

### **Lunch and Learn, sponsored by Conviva**

**Tuesday, December 17th, 11:15am - 12:30pm, Youth Center**

Join Conviva Care Center for a monthly presentation on healthy aging. (Lunch provided with registration).

### **December Birthday Celebration**

**Thursday, December 19th, 12:00 - 12:30pm, Studio B**

Join us for our Chair Yoga class at 11:15am, followed by our celebration of our members with December birthdays! Come to both the class and the celebration...or simply join us for the birthday party at 12:00pm!

### **Celebrations: Christmas Party/White Elephant Gift Exchange**

**Friday, December 20th, 11:45am - 12:45pm, Youth Center**

Let's laugh and have a good time with our White Elephant Gift Exchange. Please bring a wrapped gift worth no more than \$20 if you want to participate. Finger food and light refreshments will be provided.

### **Bridging the Gap: Reading Books to Kidzone Kids**

**Monday, December 23rd, 11:30am - 12:30pm, KidZone**

Bring your favorite kids book or read from one of the options in KidZone.