



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.

JOHNSON FAMILY YMCA | 5700 Cleveland Road | 904.765.3589 | 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.

AOA (ACTIVE OLDER ADULTS) MEETING

Monday, December 2, 9:30 – 10:30am, Healthy Living Center

All are welcome to attend.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY with PASTOR PERRY ROBINSON

Wednesdays, December 4, 11, and 18, 10:30 – 11:30am, Pre-Teen Center

All are invited to explore a fresh and non-denominational discovery of God's Word and Spirit.

GARDEN CLUB WITH OZZIE HICKS, MASTER GARDENER

Wednesdays, December 4, 11, and 18, 1:00 – 2:00pm, Front Lawn

Join us learning about gardening and gain hands-on experience growing your own food and greenspaces as we champion environmental responsibility with a master gardener. No experience needed.

BOARD GAME BLOWOUT

Friday, December 6, 11:00am – 1:00pm, Pre-Teen Center

Bring your favorite card or board games to indulge in friendly competition catering to all ages and player levels. Please bring a shareable snack.

COLOR ME CALM

Friday, December 13, 10:30am – 12:30pm, Teen Center

Connect with friends, relax, and get creative! Coloring is a great way to reduce stress and improve your mood. Please bring your crayons, coloring pencils, watercolor paints, brushes, and paint-by-number books.

CELEBRATIONS: MOTOWN CHRISTMAS DANCE PARTY

Saturday, December 14, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm, Teen Center

Are you ready for the Soul Train Line? Grab your bell bottoms and disco attire as we dance and celebrate the Holiday Season! Door prizes and best dressed contest. Refreshments provided.

MID-DAY MOVIE

Thursday, December 19, 11:00am – 1:00pm, Teen Center

Enjoy the movie, A Madea Christmas (2013), featuring Tyler Perry, Tika Sumpter, Eric Lively, JR Lemon, Alicia Witt, Lisa Whelchel, and Larry the Cable Guy. The story of Madea going to the fictional town of Bucktussle, Alabama with her great-niece to spend Christmas. Rated PG-13. Popcorn served.

BINGO!

Friday, December 20, 10:30am – 1:00pm, Pre-Teen Center

Get ready to daub those cards and yell "Bingo!" Meet new friends and have fun.

DECEMBER MEMBER APPRECIATION SOCIAL: PIZZA PARTY

Monday, December 30, 12:00 – 2:00 pm, Teen Center

Join us to give thanks for our members and guests with a slice of pizza while supplies last.