



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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WILLIAMS FAMILY YMCA | 10415 San Jose Blvd | 904.292.1660 | **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.

Holiday Hours: Tuesday, December 24th 5:00am – 12:00pm / CLOSED Wednesday, December 25th / Tuesday, December 31st 5:00am – 3:00pm

Bible Study

Every Friday, 12:30 - 1:30pm, ESPORTS Room

Come together to read/discuss the Bible in a structured and meaningful way. Open to all denominations.

Urban Soul Line Dancing

Friday, December 6th, 6:00 – 7:30pm, Gymnasium

Bring a friend and have fun learning and dancing on a Friday night!

Game Day

Tuesday, December 10th, 3:00 – 4:30pm, ESPORTS Room

Enjoy a variety of different games – from chess to cards to board games and more – with your Y friends!

Arts and Crafts

Thursday, December 12th, 3:00 – 4:30pm, ESPORTS Room

Join us monthly in creating a new craft! Peer-led and loads of fun!

Christmas Potluck

Friday, December 13th, 11:30am – 1:00pm, Gymnasium

Bring a side and bring a friend!

Lunch and Learn: Presented by Conviva

Wednesday, December 18th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm, Healthy Living Center

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

Wellness Workshop: Guided Meditation

Wednesday, December 18th, 1:15 – 2:15pm, Studio B

Members, \$20 and Guests, \$40

****Registration and payment must be made at the Welcome Center.****

Book Club

Thursday, December 19th, 1:15 - 2:15pm, Healthy Living Center

Join us for a healthy literary discussion.

Don't forget your PUNCH!

Pick up your monthly AOA Punchcard at the Welcome Center. Each time you visit the Y, get it punched at the Welcome Center.

More visits= More chances to WIN!

PICKLE BALL

Pickle Ball Play

Mon-Wed 1:00 - 4:00pm

Thursday 8:00 - 10:30am / 1:00 – 4:00pm

Friday 1:00 - 4:00pm

Sunday 10:00am – 12:00pm

Beginner Instruction

Friday 11:00am - 1:00pm

Beginner Play

Friday 12:00 - 1:00pm

If you would like to be a part of the 50 and Better Volunteer Team, we would love to chat with you! Please email Jenny Engelmeyer @ jengelmeyer@fcymca.org for more information!