



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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WINSTON FAMILY YMCA | 221 Riverside Avenue | 904.355.1436 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.**

Social: Cookie Exchange

Tuesday, December 3rd, 10:00 – 11:00am, Teaching Kitchen

Please bring 2 dozen cookies to share, store bought or homemade. Bring a container to take cookies home with you. Wear your ugly Christmas sweater or t-shirt.

Coffee and Conversation: Meet and Greet

Tuesdays, December 10th & 31st, 10:00 – 11:00am, Teaching Kitchen

Join us for coffee and conversation. Learn about the Y and enjoy fellowshiping.

Handling the Holidays in Good Health

Wednesday, December 4th, 11:00am – 12:00pm, Teaching Kitchen

Feeling a little down during the holidays? Come learn some coping strategies presented by Florida Blue.

****Please register directly with Florida Blue.****

Bible Study

Friday, December 6th, 11:00am – 12:00pm, Conference Room

Studying 31 Women of the Bible available on Amazon. Please bring your Bible and Notebook as well. All welcome.

Birthday Party & BINGO

Tuesday, December 10th, 10:00 – 11:00am, Teaching Kitchen

Come celebrate our fellow members with December birthdays...and enjoy some BINGO fun!

Lunch Bunch

Wednesday, December 11th, 12:00 – 2:00pm

Meet at Hoptinger Bier Garden, 1037 Park St. **One lucky member will have lunch on me!**

Participants will be responsible for paying for their own meals.

Spread some Holiday Cheer!

Friday, December 13th, 11:00am – 12:00pm, Teaching Kitchen

Come sign Christmas Cards to be dropped off at Nursing Homes & Memory Care Centers. There will be some cards here, but feel free to bring some to donate if you have them. ****no registration/reservation necessary****

Book Club

Tuesday, December 17th, 10:00am – 11:00am, Teaching Kitchen

This month, we are having a book exchange! Bring a wrapped book of your choice - hardback or paperback, new or gently used - to exchange. Bring some Christmas goodies to share.

Bowling

Wednesday, December 18th, 12:00 – 2:00pm

Join us at King Pin Lanes, 5310 Lenox Ave. \$8.50 gets you 2 games, shoes, hot dog, a drink, and chips.

Payment will be made at Bowling Lanes. Reserve your spot in the YMCA app!

Potluck: Christmas Brunch

Friday, December 20st, 10:45am - 12:00pm, Teaching Kitchen.

Bring your favorite dish to share.

Florida Blue Event – Painting Class

Friday, December 27th, 11:00am – 12:00pm, Teaching Kitchen.

Please register directly with Florida Blue.*

Don't forget your monthly PUNCH CARD! TEN punches on your Silver Punch Card enters you to win **PRIZES** each month! **Pick up your card at the Welcome Center TODAY!** (one per member, please)