

Keeping your blood pressure down during COVID-19

Maintaining healthy blood pressure levels is always important, but even more so in the era of COVID-19. That's because high blood pressure might raise your risk of experiencing severe complications from the coronavirus. Nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, or hypertension, which is defined as consistent readings of 130/80 or above.

If you have high blood pressure, here's what you should know to stay healthy:

Prevention is the best defense

If you have high blood pressure or another underlying condition, it is important to follow recommendations about physical distancing, handwashing, wearing face coverings and other practices that can prevent COVID-19's spread.

Follow medical advice

Patients taking common types of blood pressure medicines who contract COVID-19 should continue treatment unless otherwise advised by their physician

Avoid high blood pressure hazards

Over-the-counter medications- Decongestants and painkillers called NSAIDs, such as naproxen and ibuprofen, can increase blood pressure. People with heart concerns should limit or avoid them.

Alcohol and caffeine- Limit these — no more than three cups of caffeinated beverages a day

Manage stress- Stress can lead to bad habits, such as poor diet, that can increase the risk of developing high blood pressure.

Have extra medication on hand

Check with your doctor and pharmacy to see whether you can get a larger supply of prescription medications, so you don't have to visit the drugstore as frequently. Mail-order prescriptions might help you stock up and/or stay in.

Recognize a blood pressure emergency

A hypertensive crisis occurs when blood pressure rises quickly to readings of 180/120 or greater. If other symptoms occur such as chest or back pain, numbness or weakness, loss of vision, or difficulty breathing or speaking. CALL 911.

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PREVENTION & TREATMENT METHODS

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

CONTROL / LIMIT
Control your weight and limit your intake of fats, salt cholesterol. Aim to have a BMI of < 25.

HEALTHY EATING
Increase your intake on wholegrain, fruits and vegetables

EXERCISE
Adopt a healthy lifestyle. Aim to have 150 mins of exercise every week. Try brisk-walking, jogging or any sport activities you like!

NO SMOKING
Avoid Smoking

NO ALCOHOL
Avoid drinking alcohol.

TREATMENT

REGULAR CHECKUPS
Ensure that you visit your GP for regular checkups. Your GP will prescribe medication if needed and will provide you with personalised cholesterol goals.

MEDICATIONS
Ensure that you take your prescribed medications as required by your doctor. Your doctor will perform regular blood and urine tests to monitor for other complications.

American Heart Association editorial staff and reviewed by science and medicine advisers.

<https://www.heart.org/en/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/keeping-a-lid-on-blood-pressure-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

<https://www.forbes.com/health/healthy-aging/how-to-lower-blood-pressure/>