

# BETTER HEALTH 4 YOU

SMART LOCAL 36 BENEFIT FUND

BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL, HEART DISEASE

## What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is a measure of how hard the blood pushes against the walls of your arteries as it moves through your body. It's normal for blood pressure to go up and down throughout the day, but if it stays up, you have high blood pressure. Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension.

When blood pressure is high, it starts to damage the blood vessels, heart,

and kidneys. This can lead to heart attack, stroke, and other problems. High blood pressure is called a "silent killer," because it doesn't usually cause symptoms while it is causing this damage.

Your blood pressure consists of two numbers: systolic and diastolic. Someone with a systolic pressure of 120 and a diastolic pressure of 80 has a blood pressure of 120/80, or "120 over 80." Blood pressure is

measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

- The systolic number shows how hard the blood pushes when the heart is pumping.
- The diastolic number shows how hard the blood pushes between heartbeats, when the heart is relaxed and filling with blood.

About 1 out of 3 adults in the United States has high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. Adults should have a blood

pressure of less than 120/80. Many people fall into the category in between, called prehypertension. People with prehypertension need to make lifestyle changes to bring the blood pressure down and help prevent or delay high blood pressure.

### What causes high blood pressure?

In most cases, doctors can't point to the exact cause. But several things are known to

### HEART HEALTHY RECIPE

#### SWEET POTATO SHEPHERD'S PIE

1 # SWEET POTATOS

½ CUP SKIM MILK

½ TSP. CINNAMON OR NUTMEG

1 MED ONION, CHOPPED

1 BELL PEPPER, CHOPPED

1 # EXTRA LEAN GR. BEEF OR GR. TURKEY

½ TSP. THYME OR BASIL

1 (16OZ) BAG VEG MEDLEY, THAWED

1 CUP LOW SODIUM BEEF BROTH

2 TSP. CORNSTARCH

PREHEAT OVEN 400 DEGREES. BOIL PEELED SWEET POTATOES. COOK UNTIL TENDER (12-15 MIN). DRAIN. ADD MILK, CINNAMON OR NUTMEG AND MASH. SPRAY LARGE PAN WITH PAM. ADD ONION AND PEPPER AND COOK ABOUT 5 MINUTES. ADD MEAT AND SEASONINGS. COOK UNTIL DONE. ADD VEG, BROTH, AND CORN STARCH. COOK UNTIL THICKENED. ADD BEEF MIXTURE TO 8-9" BAKING DISH. SPREAD SWEET POTATOES OVER TOP OF BEEF AND VEG. BAKE ABOUT 15-20 MINUTES.

#### Per Serving:

Calories 352, Total Fat 6.5g,  
Sat Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0.5g,  
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g,  
Monounsaturated Fat 2.5g,  
Cholesterol 63mg,  
Sodium 196mg, Carbs 46g,  
Fiber 9g, Total sugars 14g,  
Protein 31g

raise blood pressure, including being very overweight, drinking too much alcohol, having a family history of high blood pressure, eating too much salt, and getting older.

Your blood pressure may also rise if you are not very active, you don't eat enough potassium and calcium, or you have a condition called insulin resistance.

### What are the symptoms?

High blood pressure doesn't usually cause symptoms. Most people don't know they have it until they go to the doctor for some other reason.

Very high blood pressure can cause headaches, vision problems, nausea, and vomiting. These symptoms can also be caused by dangerously high blood pressure called malignant high blood pressure. It may also be called a hypertensive crisis or hypertensive emergency. Malignant high blood pressure is a medical emergency.



### How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Most people find out that they have high blood pressure during a routine doctor visit. For your doctor to confirm that you have high blood pressure, your blood pressure must be at least 140/90 on three or more separate occasions. It is usually measured 1 to 2 weeks apart.

You may have to check your blood pressure at home if there is reason to think the readings in the doctor's office aren't accurate. You may have what is called white-coat hypertension, which is blood pressure that goes up just because you're at the doctor's office.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to lower your blood pressure is to eat a healthy diet, such as the DASH diet.

Doctors recommend:

- 1. Eating more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods
- 2. Cutting back on foods that are high in saturated fat, cholesterol, and total fat
- 3. Eating more whole grain products, fish, poultry, and nuts
- \*Eating less red meat and sweets
- 4. Eating foods that are rich in magnesium, potassium, and calcium

### Physical Activity to Lower Blood Pressure

A solid body of evidence shows that men and women of all age groups who are physically active have a decreased risk of developing high blood pressure. Findings from multiple studies indicate that exercise can lower blood pressure as much as some drugs can. People with mild and moderately elevated blood pressure who exercise 30 to 60 minutes three to four days per week (walking, jogging, cycling, or a combination) may be able to significantly decrease their blood pressure readings.

