

What Women Should Know about High Blood Pressure

Keeping the heart healthy is important for women's health. This is especially true when it comes to hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. This is a condition when the force of the blood flowing through your blood vessels is higher than it should be. High blood pressure that isn't managed properly could lead to a heart attack, stroke or heart failure. Anyone can develop high blood pressure but there are some steps that a woman can take to prevent or manage this condition.

What are the risk factors?

There are some factors that can put you at higher risk for developing high blood pressure, including:

- High cholesterol
- High blood sugar
- Being overweight or obese
- Lack of physical activity
- Eating foods that are high in salt
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Smoking

Women also should be aware that pregnancy, birth control and menopause could increase the risk of developing high blood pressure. For women who are pregnant, having high blood pressure can be dangerous for both the mother and baby. So it's important to know these risk factors.



What are the symptoms?

One in three adults have high blood pressure. Many people don't have any symptoms, and many don't even know they have it. If you don't take care of it, high blood pressure can lead to serious and severe health problems. This is why it's important to have your healthcare provider regularly check your blood pressure.



What can you do?

You should talk to your healthcare provider to know if you have this condition or are at risk for it.

Some other steps you could take to improve your heart health include:

- **Be active.** Get 30 minutes of aerobic exercise at least five times per week. This could be as simple as going for a walk.
- **Make healthier food choices.** Eating foods low in salt and fat, and lowering your daily salt intake.
- **Manage your weight.** Being overweight puts you at greater risk for many health conditions.
- **Quit smoking.** Smoking is linked to a number of health conditions, but it can be hard to quit. You can call the toll-free Texas Tobacco Quit Line at 877-YES-QUIT (937-7848) for free and confidential one-on-one counseling and support services.

Please talk to a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise or diet program.

You can learn more about available blood pressure screenings and services at HealthyTexasWomen.org.