

My pharmacist and me

MONITORING MY BLOOD PRESSURE



TIPS FOR REDUCING YOUR SALT INTAKE

- ▶ Eliminate the saltshaker.
- ▶ Replace salt with salt-free mixtures available in grocery stores.
- ▶ Enhance the taste of your food by using more fine herbs, spices, garlic and onion powders, pepper and flavoured vinegars.
- ▶ Choose fresh or frozen over canned foods.
- ▶ Avoid ready-to-eat foods and fast food.
- ▶ Choose spring water or low-sodium sparkling water (less than 20 grams of sodium per litre).

LIMIT YOUR INTAKE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ▶ Canned or pouch soups
- ▶ Beef, chicken or vegetable broths, cubed or canned
- ▶ Salty meats: ham, bacon, sausages and other deli meats
- ▶ Smoked fish
- ▶ Salty snacks (potato chips, crackers, popcorn, etc.)
- ▶ Frozen dinners, pizza, Chinese food, fast food



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT SHOULD MY BLOOD PRESSURE BE?

Blood pressure for hypertension patients should be lower than 140/90 mmHg. If you are diabetic, your blood pressure must be lower than 130/80.

WHAT ARE THE MEDICATION'S SIDE EFFECTS?

Generally, hypertension medications are well tolerated. But sometimes they may cause fatigue, dizziness or headaches, which diminish after a few days of treatment. If you are experiencing side effects that make you uncomfortable or concerned, talk to your pharmacist or physician.

IS IT NORMAL FOR MY DOCTOR TO PRESCRIBE SEVERAL MEDICATIONS?

It has been shown that target blood pressure is more likely to be reached by combining low doses of more than one medication rather than a high dose of just one medication. This method may also reduce side effects.

ONCE MY BLOOD PRESSURE IS CONTROLLED, CAN I STOP TAKING MY MEDICATIONS?

Antihypertensives do not cure the disease, they control it. You will need to take them for a long time. However, by changing your lifestyle (losing weight, exercising, reducing your salt intake), it is possible that your blood pressure will improve enough to reduce your dose and perhaps the number of medications. It would be unusual to stop taking them completely.

OTHER QUESTIONS? ASK YOUR PHARMACIST.

HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY BODY

Changing your lifestyle is an important part of your hypertension treatment.

WEIGHT

Losing weight is one of the most effective ways to reduce blood pressure. Losing weight both by changing your diet and increasing your physical activity is important.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Physical activity of average intensity 30 to 60 minutes a day, four times or more a week is ideal—for example, cycling, brisk walking, swimming, aquafit, hiking, social dancing, etc. You can also spread your exercise sessions over the course of a day—for example, a 15-minute walk in the morning and a 20-minute bike ride in the evening.

ALCOHOL

Limit your alcohol consumption to less than 2 drinks a day. For men: less than 14 drinks a week. For women: less than 9 drinks a week.

SALT, SODIUM

Limit your intake of table salt: 2,000 mg a day.

DIET

Eat a balanced diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, dietary fibre, fish and lean meat as recommended by Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

TOBACCO

Quitting smoking considerably reduces the risk of heart disease.

STRESS

Effective stress management helps to control blood pressure.

PRECAUTIONS BEFORE TAKING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- ▶ Do not consume any caffeine within 1 hour before taking a reading.
- ▶ Do not smoke between 15 and 30 minutes before taking a reading.
- ▶ Do not take medications such as oral decongestants (Sudafed, Sinutab, Tylenol Sinus, etc.), which could increase blood pressure.
- ▶ Have an empty bladder.
- ▶ Wear sufficient clothing.
- ▶ Stay seated for 5 minutes, support your back and forearm and uncross your legs.
- ▶ Don't talk during the reading.

It is recommended that you take two readings, two minutes apart and calculate the average. If you are on hypertension medication, we recommend taking your blood pressure in the morning, before you take your medication.



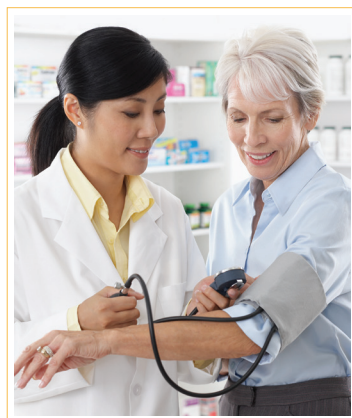
FOLLOW-UP WITH YOUR PHARMACIST, A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST

To optimize your hypertension treatment, make your pharmacist your key ally.

YOUR ADVANTAGES:

- ▶ Follow-up that fits your work schedule
- ▶ No waiting at the clinic
- ▶ A booklet with a compilation of your blood pressure measurements
- ▶ Follow-up with your doctor
- ▶ Answers to all your questions

Check with your pharmacist for details about the monitoring program and related costs. Also check with your insurer to see if the program is covered by your drug plan.



WITH MY PHARMACIST,
MY TREATMENT IS SIMPLE

You have hypertension and your doctor has prescribed medication? Your pharmacist is always available to answer your questions. In fact, he or she is your best resource for following up on your treatment.

The Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP) prepared this brochure to help you better understand your hypertension, its treatment and its impact on your life. You will also learn how to work with your pharmacist to ensure the success of your treatment.



ALMOST 95% OF
HYPERTENSION CASES
HAVE NO KNOWN CAUSE.
HOWEVER, SOME FACTORS
CAN INCREASE RISKS:

- ▶ Family history: If one or both of your parents have or had hypertension, you are at greater risk of having it.
- ▶ Age: The older you are, the more you are at risk of having hypertension.
- ▶ Ethnicity and gender.
- ▶ Unhealthy diet.
- ▶ Smoking.
- ▶ Excessive alcohol and drug abuse.
- ▶ Physical inactivity.
- ▶ Stress.
- ▶ Unhealthy weight, diabetes and kidney disease.
- ▶ Snoring.


THE ABCs OF BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure is a measure of the pressure or force of blood against the parietes of your blood vessels (known as arteries). It provides various organs with blood that's rich in oxygen and other necessary substances.

WHAT DO THE READINGS MEAN?

The first number is the pressure of your heart as it contracts (systolic). The second number is the pressure of your heart as it relaxes (diastolic).

Generally, "normal" blood pressure is about 120/80 mmHg. When readings are above 140/90 mmHg, we talk about



IT IS CRITICAL TO
PROPERLY TREAT THE
DISEASE TO PREVENT
SEVERE COMPLICATIONS.

hypertension, more commonly called "high blood pressure."

NO SYMPTOMS, BUT...

Hypertension does not present symptoms, but damage to your body can be significant. This disease can even cause serious problems such as:

- ▶ Cerebrovascular accident (stroke)
- ▶ Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
- ▶ Heart failure
- ▶ Kidney failure

BLOOD PRESSURE TARGET VALUES	
CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC/ DIASTOLIC
Normal	120 -129 / 80 -84
High-normal	130 -139 / 85 -89
Blood pressure (measured by the doctor)	140 / 90
Blood pressure (measured at home or with a personal monitor)	135 / 85
Blood pressure in diabetics	130 / 80

CONTROL YOUR HYPERTENSION

Hypertension can be controlled with the appropriate medications. The disease cannot be cured, so medications are a long-term treatment—thus the importance of being monitored by your pharmacist, a medications expert. As a healthcare professional, he or she will also advise you about changing your lifestyle.

EXPERT ADVICE

To best integrate your treatment with your daily life, form a partnership with your pharmacist. At the start of treatment, you will need to:

- ▶ Monitor stress more frequently
- ▶ Cope with some mostly benign side effects
- ▶ Adjust your doses

COMPLIANCE WITH YOUR TREATMENT

It is very important that you continue taking your medications, even if you feel good. Because you will not generally feel any symptoms with this disease, you will not feel the benefits of treatment.



NEVER STOP YOUR TREATMENT
WITHOUT TALKING TO YOUR
PHARMACIST OR PHYSICIAN.



YOUR PHARMACIST CAN ADJUST YOUR
DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION

After getting the treatment targets from your doctor, your pharmacist can adjust the dose of your medicine based on the effectiveness and side effects.

WHAT IS THIS SERVICE?

To adjust the dose of your medicine, your pharmacist must obtain from your doctor the targets for the control of your blood pressure. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor to indicate those targets on the prescription. Thereafter, your pharmacist will make an initial meeting with you to define your treatment plan and the follow-ups.

At the following meetings, your pharmacist will be able to adjust your medication according to your blood pressure and possible side effects.

TAKING YOUR OWN BLOOD PRESSURE

If you would like to take your own blood pressure at home, your pharmacist will recommend a reliable device and teach you how to use it properly. On a regular basis, he or she can analyze your readings and discuss them with you. If necessary, recommendations will be made to your physician.



YOUR PHARMACIST IS
THERE FOR YOU. DON'T
HESITATE TO ASK.