

# My blood pressure log



Produced by the Prevention in Clinical Settings Sector  
Direction de santé publique  
Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal

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# MY BLOOD PRESSURE LOG BOOK

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (civic number, street, apartment)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
Province

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postal code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone number

## My healthcare team:

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacist: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Other (e.g. dietician): \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_



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## MY APPOINTMENTS

Appointments with a health professional, or for examinations or blood tests

**Date**

**With whom?**

**Results**


## MY APPOINTMENTS

Appointments with a health professional, or for examinations or blood tests

<b>Date</b>	<b>With whom?</b>	<b>Results</b>

## MY MEDICATIONS

**Name**

**Date**

**When?**


**Note any allergies or reactions to a medication, specify which one.**

## MY MEDICATIONS

Name	Date	When?

Note any allergies or reactions to a medication, specify which one.

## WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

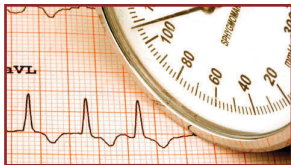
The risk of developing high blood pressure (hypertension) increases with age. In fact, over the age of 40, one person out of every five is affected. There is no specific cause in 90% of all cases.

Everyone should have his or her blood pressure checked at least once a year by a health professional (doctor, nurse or pharmacist).

If your doctor has confirmed that you have high blood pressure, we recommend that you measure your blood pressure twice in the morning and twice in the evening for the first week, and before going to see your doctor. After that, you can measure it occasionally, and record the results in your logbook along with the date (see pages 28 to 37).

### What is high blood pressure?

Blood pressure (BP) is the force exerted by circulating blood on the walls of the arteries. High blood pressure means that the arterial blood pressure is too high.



There are two numbers involved in measuring your blood pressure:

**The top number** represents the force exerted when your heart beats and pumps blood to your whole body (systolic pressure, e.g. 135 mmHg).

**The bottom number** occurs between heartbeats, when your heart relaxes and fills with blood (diastolic pressure, e.g. 85 mmHg).

These numbers should be  
**at the clinic or the pharmacy:**

↓ less than 140 mmHg / 90 mmHg

**at home:**

↓ less than 135 mmHg / 85 mmHg

**for special cases:**

- people with diabetes should aim for 130 mmHg / 80 mmHg
- people with kidney disease should aim for 140 mmHg / 90 mmHg
- people over the age of 80 should aim for 150 mmHg / 90 mmHg

### PLEASE NOTE:

Your blood pressure may be high when it is measured at the doctor's office, but normal elsewhere; this is known as "white coat hypertension".

Or, it may be high at home or at work but normal at the doctor's office; this is "masked hypertension".

Both phenomena are a sign of the beginning of a blood pressure problem that must be monitored...

# THE RIGHT WAY TO MEASURE

To get accurate numbers, you will need:

## 1. A good automatic blood pressure monitor

(for a list, visit [www.hypertension.ca](http://www.hypertension.ca))

## 2. The right technique

### Before taking a reading:

- Rest for at least 5 minutes
- No coffee, cigarettes or stimulants for one hour beforehand
- No physical exercise within 30 minutes of reading
- Be in a quiet place where the temperature is comfortable
- Make sure you go to the bathroom beforehand
- Relax

### While taking a reading:

- Do not talk
- Be seated, back supported
- Uncross your legs
- Keep feet flat on the floor
- Rest arm on the table
- Place the cuff 3 cm above the fold of your elbow
- Make sure that your clothing is not constricting your arm
- Always use the same arm



**Do not talk**

**Cuff 3 cm above  
the fold of elbow**

**Middle of arm  
at heart height**

**Arm supported**

**Back supported**

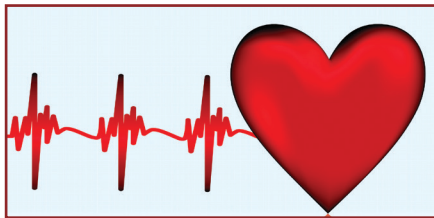
**Legs uncrossed**

**Feet flat on the floor**

## CARDIOVASCULAR RISKS

A healthy lifestyle can help prevent heart and circulation problems or slow their progression.

- Eat healthy by following the Canadian Food Guide.
- Cut down on your consumption of fatty and salty foods.
- Manage your weight.
- Be more active every day.
- Quit smoking.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- Learn how to better manage your stress.
- Control your blood pressure.



There is no point in trying to change everything at once. If you want to stay motivated, your best bet is to make changes gradually. Why not start with the things that are easiest?

**Other risk factors** require more regular medical follow-up:

- high cholesterol
- high blood sugar (or diabetes)
- heart or circulation problems

Finally, remember that the risk of heart disease increases not only with age, but also if your family has a history of heart or circulation problems (such as strokes).

**Take time to talk with a health professional.**

# EATING YOUR WAY TO LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

What you eat affects your blood pressure.

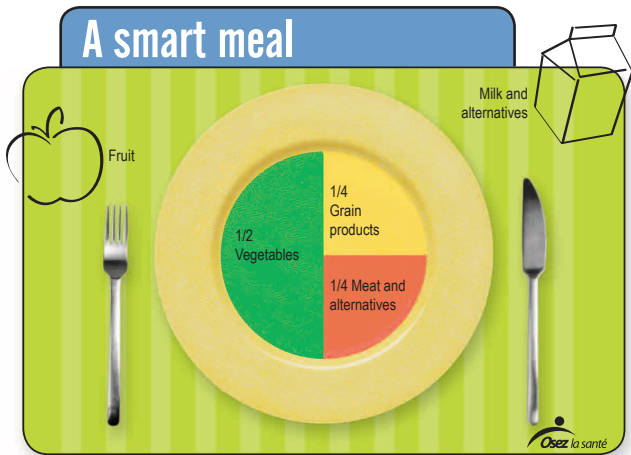
## What can you do?

### Fruits and vegetables

- Include a fruit in your breakfast – for example, on cereal, on toast or mixed with yogurt.
- Eat vegetables and fruits at lunch and supper.
- Snack on fruits and vegetables.

### Milk and low-fat substitutes

- Drink 1% or skim milk every day.
- Eat yogurt with less than 1% fat.
- Eat cheese with less than 15% fat.



## Whole grain breads and cereals

- Read the list of ingredients and choose breads and cereals whose first ingredient is listed as “whole grains”.
- Try out several whole grain products to find the ones you like best, including whole-wheat pasta, whole-wheat English muffins, oats, oatmeal, quinoa and brown or wild rice.

## Fish and legumes

- Eat fish twice a week.
- Try recipes with legumes, such as chili with red kidney beans, lentil soup, chickpea salad. In your meat-based dishes, replace 1/3 of the meat with legumes or crumbled tofu.



**Make one or two changes at a time, based on your tastes and preferences. What will you try first?**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SALT

Salt causes your blood pressure to rise. You might think that because you are sparing with your saltshaker, you are not eating too much salt. That may not be true, because most of the salt people eat is in processed foods such as ready-to-serve meals and deli meats, not to mention meals in restaurants.

### **Did you know...**

*Improving your eating habits lowers your blood pressure just as much as medication!!!*

### **How to eat less salt**

- Eat less fast food, ready-to-eat meals (frozen or canned), pizzas, pasta and packaged seasoned rice dishes.
- When you prepare soups and sauces, use homemade chicken, beef or vegetable bouillon or buy low-sodium brands.
- Make your own pasta sauces instead of buying a prepared sauce.
- Choose canned tomatoes that do not contain added salt.

- Limit the amount of tomato or vegetable juice you drink to 125 ml (1/2 cup) a day, or opt for a low-sodium alternative.
- Replace cold cuts with poultry, roast beef or roast of pork loin. Cook fondue meats and eat it cold.
- Cut back on your consumption of meat, poultry and fish containing sodium-based additives. That would include “seasoned” pork, frozen roast beef and fish ... as well as their marinated or smoked varieties.
- Avoid canned vegetables - buy fresh or frozen ones instead.
- Make you own salad dressings or choose a low-sodium dressing when you shop.
- Moderate the amount of cheese you eat (no more than 1 ounce a day, even if it's light).



- Cut down on the amount of condiments you eat - pickles, olives, BBQ sauce, ketchup, mustard, relish, and the like.
- To add flavour to your cooking, use herbs, spices, garlic and onion powder, pepper, garlic, zest of lemon or lime, fresh ginger, flavoured vinegar or Tabasco™. Mix your own seasonings or buy commercial mixes that do not contain added salt.
- If you drink bottled water, whether it's plain, mineral, carbonized or sparkling, make sure that it contains less than 40 mg sodium/litre.
- It's best not to leave a saltshaker, sea salt or vegetable salt on the table when you eat.



## **SHEDDING SOME WEIGHT... OR KEEPING IT OFF**

Losing weight also lowers blood pressure. If you want to lose weight, don't fall into the trap of miracle diets. Set realistic expectations for yourself. Remember too that even if you continue to carry around a few extra kilos, eating well and being active will positively affect your health.

In an ideal world, you would aim for a waist circumference of 102 centimetres (40 inches) if you were a man and 88 centimetres (35 inches) if you were a woman. Don't confuse this measurement with the waistline of your pants.



**Don't rush it!**  
It is unrealistic to think that all the weight can be lost in a few weeks.

## STEPPING UP YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There are a 1001 ways to be active!  
To find out what's best for you, start with things you enjoy - and are good at!

### **Are you a nature lover?**

A walk in the woods, a paddle in a canoe, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing could fit the bill!



### **Do you like doing things with other people?**

Why not join a walking club or a tennis, volleyball or badminton team, or sign up for a fitness class?

### **Do you have a busy schedule?**

Walking, biking and in-line skating are great ways to get to work; a walk at lunch time will stimulate your appetite or help you digest; take the stairs instead of the elevator.

**Find a fun way to get rid of stress and REDUCE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE by 5 TO 7 mmHg.**

## **Are you the artistic type?**

Dance to your favourite music at home, or sign up for a Latin, hip-hop, or ballroom dancing class!

## **Do you need to relax?**

You might consider yoga, Tai chi or Pilates.

Start at your own pace, and continue until you are slightly out of breath. Before long, you will start to feel in better shape.

Make sure that you are being followed by a doctor if you have high blood pressure.

Go to see a kinesiologist, who can help you put together a fitness program that is safe and suited to your needs.



## QUITTING SMOKING

It can take time to quit smoking altogether. Like everyone else, you have your own pace, and you need to be ready ... The important thing is not to get discouraged if you don't succeed the first time.

Your chances to succeed increase if you use the medication prescribed by your doctor. **Gums, patches, drops, inhalers and mouth sprays** are effective and readily available at your local drugstore.

Individual support and smoking cessation groups are available at **your CLSC's Quit-Smoking Centre.**

The **iQuitnow** helpline is there to answer your questions from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**1-866-527-7383**

[www.iquitnow.qc.ca](http://www.iquitnow.qc.ca)



## DRINKING LESS ALCOHOL



Too much alcohol will increase your blood pressure. It can also make your antihypertensive medications less effective.

### Maximum consumption:

- **For a man:** 1 or 2 drinks a day up to a maximum of 14 per week.
- **For a woman:** 1 drink a day up to a maximum of 9 per week.

### One drink is equivalent to:

- 1 bottle of beer (341 ml),
- 150 ml (5 ounces) of wine,
- 45 ml (1.5 ounces) of spirits or
- 100 ml (3 ounces) of dessert wine

All alcoholic beverages contain a significant amount of calories and can contribute to weight gain!

## MANAGING YOUR STRESS

Getting to know yourself and learning how to relax in all sorts of situations really do help lower your blood pressure.

### **Choose what is right for you:**

- walking
- meditating
- dancing
- cycling
- working out
- gardening
- talking to or confiding in someone else
- other

Another simple relaxation technique is to take a few deep breaths (count 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 as you breathe in, and again as you breathe out). Do it a few times a day. Making choices and setting priorities also help reduce stress. Plan to make time to relax.



## MEDICATIONS

Any medications your doctor prescribes must be **taken regularly every day to be effective.**

For many people, it may be necessary to increase the dose or even add another medication to adequately reduce their blood pressure. **If you feel unwell or experience side effects,** talk to your health professional before you stop taking a drug.



The medications your doctor prescribes are an effective means of relaxing your blood vessels or reducing excess fluids in your body. They need to be taken on a long-term basis.

**THE FIRST THREE MONTHS  
ARE IMPORTANT**  
in assessing your response  
to treatment.

**Check your blood pressure  
when your medications are  
changed or you feel unwell.**

## **Here are a few helpful hints to keep in mind:**

- Always take your medications at the same times each day.
- Keep your medications in the same place, where you are sure to see them.
- Keep your medications in a medication organizer so that you won't skip a day.
- Ask your doctor to reduce the number of pills by combining them.
- Put a check mark on your calendar or your logbook every day (pages 28 and following).
- Measure your blood pressure at the same times every day.

**The main reason why treatment fails is that patients fail to comply with their treatment.**

## **If your blood pressure remains higher than 135 mmHg / 85 mmHg at home,**

talk to your doctor, your nurse or your pharmacist.

## **FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET**

**Hypertension:** [www.hypertension.ca](http://www.hypertension.ca)

**Heart disease:** [www.heartandstroke.com](http://www.heartandstroke.com)

**Diabetes:** [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

**Healthy eating:**

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php)

**DASH diet:**

[www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.ikIQLcMWJtE/b.3862329/k.4F4/Healthy\\_living\\_\\_The\\_DASH\\_Diet\\_to\\_lower\\_blood\\_pressure.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.ikIQLcMWJtE/b.3862329/k.4F4/Healthy_living__The_DASH_Diet_to_lower_blood_pressure.htm)

**Salt:** [www.sodium101.ca](http://www.sodium101.ca)

**Physical activity:** [www.participation.com/en-us/home.aspx](http://www.participation.com/en-us/home.aspx)

**Smoking:** [www.iquitnow.qc.ca](http://www.iquitnow.qc.ca)

**Stress:** [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/cvd-mcv/reduce\\_stress-reuire\\_stress-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/cvd-mcv/reduce_stress-reuire_stress-eng.php)

## MY BLOOD PRESSURE LOG

See: The right way to measure your blood pressure, pages 9, 10 and 11

<b>Date</b>	<b>BP Morning</b>	<b>Pulse Morning</b>	<b>BP Evening</b>	<b>Pulse Evening</b>
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# THE RIGHT NUMBERS

AT THE CLINIC

140

90

AT HOME

135

85

*Agence de la santé  
et des services sociaux  
de Montréal*

Québec

