

## HEALTH

# High Blood Pressure

**D**id you know that high blood pressure (hypertension) can occur at any age?

**H**igh blood pressure is a serious illness. It puts extra stress on the walls of your blood vessels. Most people have no signs of this illness. You won't know if you have high blood pressure unless you have your blood pressure checked.

People who are overweight or eat a lot of salt are more likely to have high blood pressure. African Americans have a higher risk than others.

### **YOU CAN LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE IF YOU:**

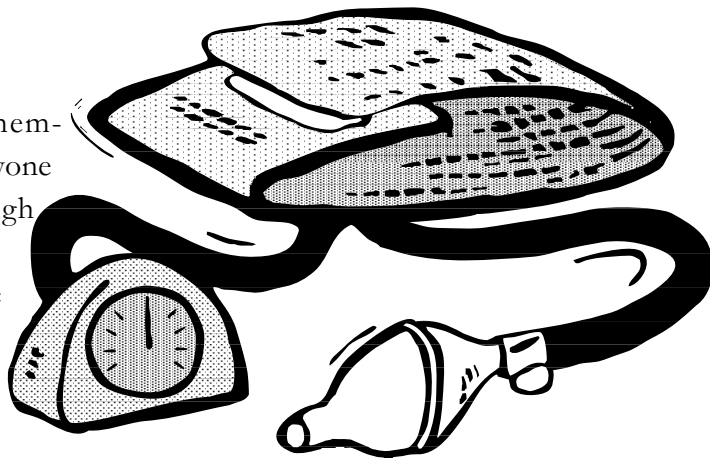
- **Use less salt.** Try using lemon juice, fresh or dried herbs and other spices. Avoid salty snacks like pretzels, potato chips and corn chips. Salt is in almost all prepared foods, such as lunch meat, canned and frozen foods, cheese, ketchup, pickles, and ice cream. Read the labels to see if salt is in the foods that you eat. Some labels list salt as sodium. Sodium is the same as salt.
- **Lose weight if you are overweight.** High blood pressure is twice as common for people who are overweight. The best way to lose weight is to eat less and exercise. Try taking smaller amounts of the foods

you eat. Go for a daily walk. Walking is cheap and easy and a good way to exercise.

- **Don't smoke.** Smoking a cigarette raises your blood pressure. It also makes the heart work harder. Smoking when you have high blood pressure gives you a higher chance of disease.
- **Relax.** High blood pressure has been linked to stress. Take time each day to relax or do what you enjoy.

**R**emember, anyone with high blood pressure **MUST** be under a doctor's care. If you are being treated by a doctor, you also must take the right amount of medicine at the right time. High blood pressure is an illness that can be treated. But, if not treated, it can result in a heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, or even death.

**Don't take a chance. Get your blood pressure checked. ■**



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