An anatomical illustration of the human circulatory system, showing the heart, lungs, and major blood vessels (red for oxygenated, blue for deoxygenated). A blood pressure cuff is shown on the left arm. The background is a solid red color.

WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

**A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING
HYPERTENSION**

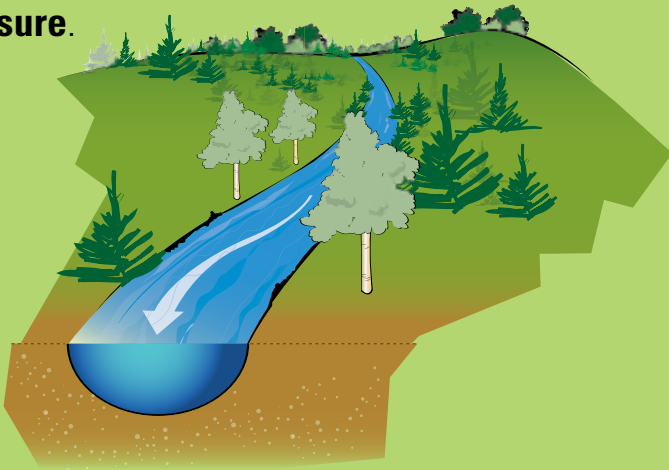


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CONSEIL CRI DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE LA BAIE JAMES
CREE BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES OF JAMES BAY

HOW THE BODY WORKS

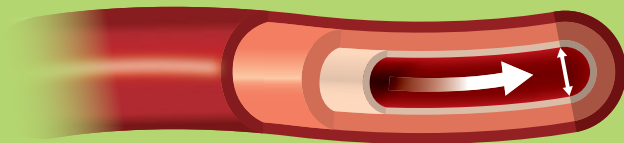
Blood vessels carry blood to the different parts of the body (heart, brain, kidneys, etc.).

When your heart pumps, the force of blood pushing against the walls of your vessels is called **blood pressure**.



Blood pressure is like the current of the river. When current runs smoothly, the land is kept moist to help the trees to grow.

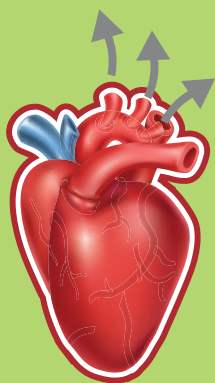
In the same way, when your vessels are wide and smooth, blood flows easily. Healthy blood pressure protects your **heart**, **brain** and **kidneys**.



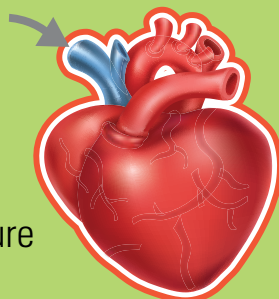
HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE

Your heart is like a pump, pushing blood through the vessels.

There are 2 numbers in blood pressure.



The higher number is called **systolic**. It measures the force against the vessels when your heart is **pushing blood**.



The lower number is called **diastolic**. It measures the pressure when your heart is **resting and filling with blood**.

Target blood pressure for people living with diabetes or kidney problems is less than **130/80**.

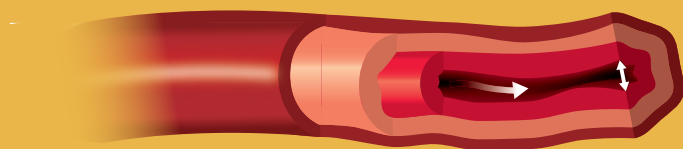
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure goes up when your blood vessels become narrow and stiff. Your heart has to pump harder and blood does not flow smoothly through the vessels.

High blood pressure (hypertension) is like a raging river, the strong current breaks the land and trees along the riverbanks.



In the same way, having high blood pressure for a long time can damage your blood vessels. It can cause **heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease or eye problems**.



HOW TO KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTHY

FOOD



Quantity matters

This handy guide will help you figure out how much to eat at mealtime.



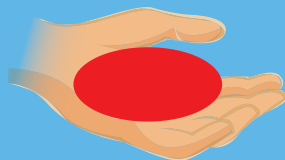
Vegetables



Starch, fruit



Fat



Protein

HOW TO KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTHY

DECREASE
SALT



Too much salt makes your body hold on to water. This extra water raises your blood pressure. Your heart must pump harder to push blood.

Salt (sodium) does not only come from the shaker.

To help you choose foods that do not contain too much sodium look at the nutrition table on food packages.

Look at
the amount
of salt

Nutrition Facts

Per 125 mL (87 g)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 80	
Fat 0.5 g	1 %
Saturated 0 g	0 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 70 mg	3 %
Carbohydrate 18 g	
Fibre 2 g	
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 3 g	1 %
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 10 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 2 %

How much
sodium
in the food?

Too much 400 + mg

Watch out 200-400 mg

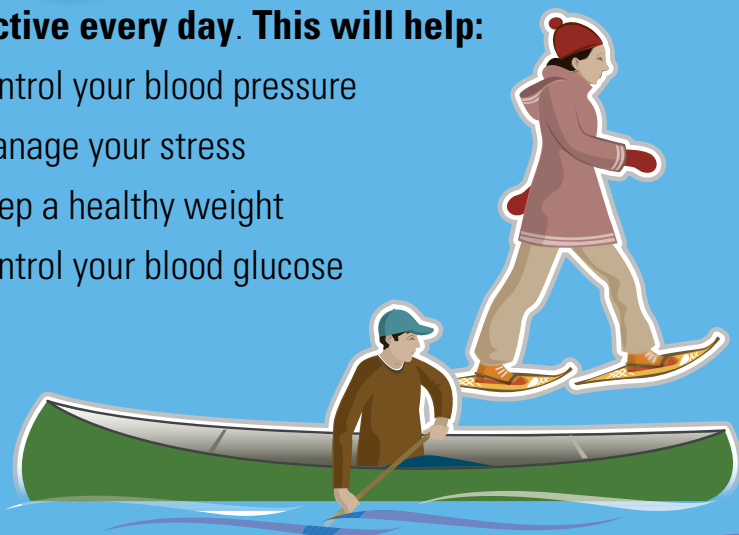
Go ahead 0-200 mg

HOW TO KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTHY

EXERCISE

Be active every day. This will help:

- Control your blood pressure
- Manage your stress
- Keep a healthy weight
- Control your blood glucose



Aim for 30 minutes per day. Any amount of activity helps!

Walk as much as possible to do your daily chores.



HOW TO KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTHY

**STOP
SMOKING**

Quit smoking or do not start!

Smoking can raise your blood pressure by making your blood vessels hard and stiff.

Make your home smoke-free!

Second-hand smoke is also harmful to you and your loved ones. Ask your family and visitors to smoke outside.

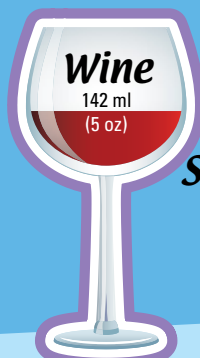
Limit your alcohol consumption.

Maximum of 1 to 2 drinks on **one single occasion.**

Plan non-drinking days every week.

**DECREASE
ALCOHOL**

**What counts
as “one” drink**



Shooters



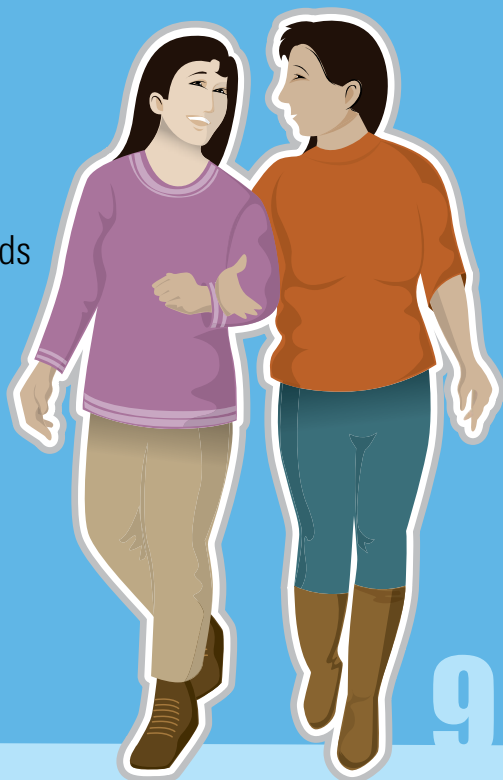
HOW TO KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTHY

MANAGE STRESS

Bringing down your stress level will help reduce your blood pressure and improve your overall health.

Tips to help you cope with stress:

- Spend time in the bush
- Do a physical activity you like
- Have enough sleep
- Listen to music
- Do arts and crafts
- Enjoy good times with family and friends



HOW TO KEEP BLOOD PRESSURE HEALTHY

PILLS

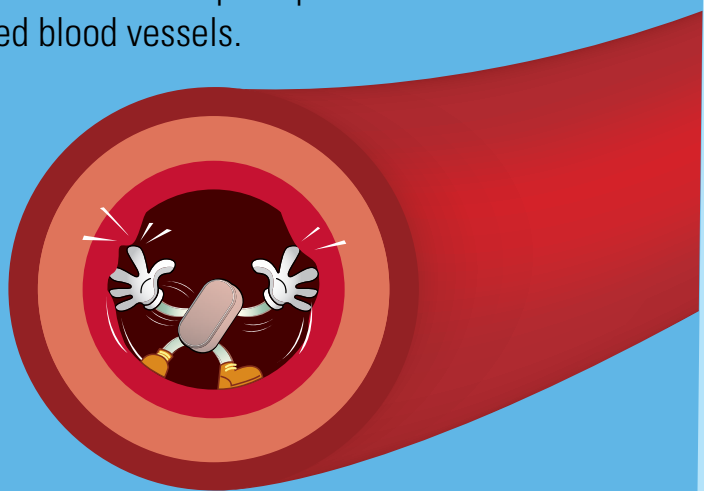


Take your **blood pressure pills** as prescribed by your doctor.

There are different kinds of pills to manage your blood pressure.

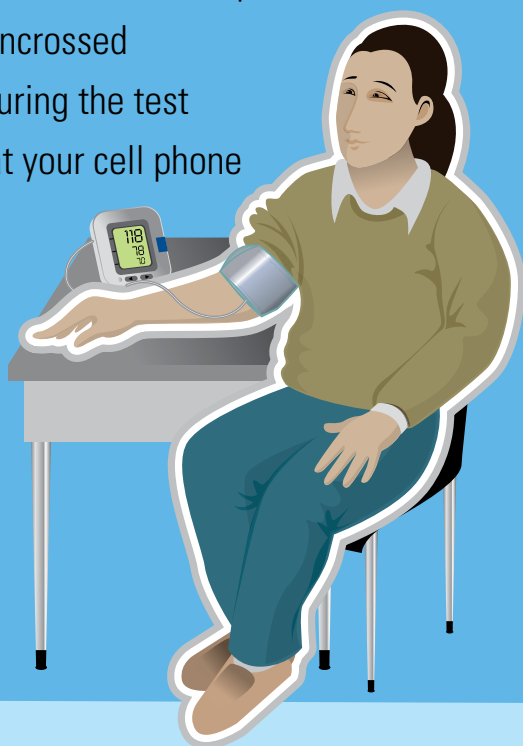
The **diuretics** or “water pills” will help your kidneys get rid of the extra salt and water through the urine.

Other pills will relax and open up the narrowed blood vessels.



WHAT TO DO BEFORE AND DURING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE TEST

- Wear loose and comfortable clothing
- Don't smoke 30 minutes before
- Don't drink coffee or energy drinks 30 minutes before
- Don't eat a big meal 2 hours before
- Empty your bladder
- Arrive calm and in no pain
- Relax on your seat for at least 5 minutes before the test
- Support your back and your feet
- Support your arm with blood pressure cuff at heart level
- Keep legs uncrossed
- Don't talk during the test
- Don't look at your cell phone



TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN, HEART AND KIDNEYS



GET YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED AND AIM FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE!

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To print more copies of this document,
and for different language versions, go to:
<http://creehealth.org/library/bloodpressure>



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