

Your Guide To:

- The blood pressure basics
- Understanding your risk
- The dangers of hypertension
- Prevention & management of hypertension

By reviewing this material and completing the associated quiz, you will be eligible to qualify for the **Blood Pressure** incentive (\$100/year) under the 2018 Health Improvement Incentive Program. Successful completion of the quiz will automatically be reported for you. For more information visit hr.conocophillips.com.

Blood Pressure Basics:

Blood pressure is the force of blood against your artery walls as it circulates through your body. Blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day, but it can cause health problems if it stays high for a long time. High blood pressure is a risk factor that can lead to heart disease and stroke—the leading causes of death in America.

Blood pressure is measured using two numbers:

- **Systolic blood pressure** (the upper number) indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when the heart beats.

- **Diastolic blood pressure** (the lower number) indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls while the heart is resting between beats.

If the measurement is 120 systolic and 80 diastolic, you would say “120 over 80” or write it as “120/80 mmHg.”

Understanding Your Risk:

Extensive research has identified factors that increase a person’s risk of coronary heart disease in general and heart attack in particular. The more risk factors you have, and the greater the level of each risk factor, the higher your chance of developing coronary heart disease. Based on the Framingham Heart Study, the Framingham Risk Score is the estimation of the 10-year cardiovascular disease risk of a person. It is used to estimate the risk of heart attacks in adults older than 20.

See what your risk is: [Framingham Risk Score Calculator](#)

Once you understand your risk you can begin to make changes that matter. Start by taking control of your blood pressure.

Blood Pressure Stages

Blood Pressure Category	Systolic mm Hg (upper #)		Diastolic mm Hg (lower #)
Normal	less than 120	and	less than 80
Elevated	120-129	and	less than 80
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1	130-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2	140 or higher	or	90 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis (Seek Emergency Care)	higher than 180	and/or	higher than 120

Dangers of Hypertension:

High blood pressure, commonly referred to as hypertension, is when the force of blood flowing through your vessels is consistently too high. This constant pressure can damage and weaken the artery walls putting your health in danger. High blood pressure is considered a reading over 130/80.

Nearly 75 million American adults are hypertensive, and most are unaware they have an issue. There are often **no** signs or symptoms other than your blood pressure readings. Knowing your numbers by measuring your blood pressure is the best way to protect yourself from chronic diseases caused by hypertension.

If left untreated high blood pressure may lead to other conditions such as a heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and loss of vision.

There are some risk factors that are uncontrollable including your gender, family history and age. If your parents or other close blood relatives have high blood pressure, there's an increased chance that you'll get it.

Men under the age of 45 are more likely to be hypertensive than women under the age of 45.

At age 65 high blood pressure affects more women than men. African Americans are more likely to develop hypertension at an earlier age than other races.

Did You Know?

About **7** of every **10**-people having their first heart attack have high blood pressure

About **8** out of every **10**-people having their first stroke have high blood pressure

Controllable Risk Factors:

Although some risk factors are uncontrollable, there are many controllable risk factors that can prevent or manage hypertension. The following unhealthy behaviors increase your risk for developing hypertension.

- Smoking Tobacco
- Unhealthy diet (eating foods high in sodium)
- Not getting enough physical activity
- Being obese
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Diabetes

Make Changes That Matter:

High blood pressure cannot be cured but can be managed effectively through lifestyle modifications, and when needed medication.



Eat a Healthy Diet

Eating a healthy diet is an important factor that can reduce your risk of high blood pressure. It is recommended that you stay away from packaged and processed foods which are high in saturated fat and sodium, both which are contributors to high blood pressure.

Even a small reduction in sodium can reduce blood pressure by up to 8 mmHg. According to the American Heart Association, many experts now believe that lowering daily consumption to no more than 1,500 mg of sodium daily would be an effective way to prevent or lower high blood pressure. Talk with your healthcare provider about sodium intake recommendations.

Eating a healthy diet low in saturated fat, and high in fruits and veggies can lower your blood pressure by up to 14 mmHg.

Potassium can lessen the effects of sodium on blood pressure. The best sources of potassium are foods such as fruits and vegetables rather than supplements.

Reading nutrition labels can help you make the right food choices. Remember the 5% and 20% rule:

- If a food item has 5% daily value or less of saturated fat and/or sodium, it is considered “low” and acceptable to eat in moderation.
- If a food item has 20% daily value or more of saturated fat and/or sodium, it is considered “high” Put it down!

Limit Alcohol:

Moderation matters. If you drink alcohol, limit your consumption to no more than two drinks per day for men and no more than one drink per day for women. A drink is one 12 oz. beer, 4 oz. of wine, 1.5 oz. of 80-proof spirits or 1 oz. of 100-proof spirits.

Aim to eat a diet that’s rich in:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole-grains
- Low-fat dairy products
- Skinless poultry and fish
- Nuts and legumes
- Non-tropical vegetable oils

Limit:

- Saturated and trans fats
- Sodium
- Red meat (if you do eat red meat, sourced responsibly, compare labels and select the leanest cuts available)
- Sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages

Quick Tip:

It is important to check your blood pressure regularly either by yourself or by your physician.

Tips for monitoring:

- Sit quietly for three to five minutes beforehand
- Place the cuff on inch above the bend of your elbow
- Remember to keep legs uncrossed
- Take slow deep breaths

[Click here](#) for more information



Quit Smoking:

Cigarette smoking is the most important preventable cause of premature death in the United States. Every time you smoke it causes a temporary increase in blood pressure.

The life expectancy for smokers is at least 10 years shorter than for nonsmokers. Cigarette smokers have a higher risk of developing several chronic disorders. These include fatty buildups in arteries, several types of cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (lung problems).

There are numerous tips, tools and programs available to help you quit smoking. You can participate in the company sponsored tobacco cessation program through Aetna (866-213-0153), or speak to your healthcare provider about options such as self-paced programs, nicotine replacement therapy or medication.



Maintain a Healthy Weight:

About 70% of adults in the United States are classified as overweight. As your body weight increases, your blood pressure can rise. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for developing high blood pressure.

Studies suggest that approximately 78% of the hypertension cases in men and 65% in women can be directly attributed to obesity. The Framingham Heart Study revealed that a 5% weight gain increases hypertension risk by 30% in a 4-year time period.

However, losing even a few pounds may make a huge difference. Losing as few as 10 lbs. can help manage or prevent high blood pressure in many overweight or obese people.

Two essential components to achieve and maintain a healthy weight are eating well and moving often.

Implement new strategies to set yourself up for weight loss success! ***Change your environment. Willpower decreases when you are repeatedly exposed to temptations.*** Clean out your pantry and meal prep to help stay away from unhealthy foods that cause weight gain.

To determine if your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI does not measure body fat directly, however research shows that BMI is correlated with more direct measures of body fat such as skin caliper testing. Your BMI is measured using your height and weight. A BMI of over 25 is considered overweight, and over 30 being obese. Use the chart below to see if you have a healthy BMI.

WEIGHT lbs	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	200	205	210	215
kgs	45.5	47.7	50.0	52.3	54.5	56.8	59.1	61.4	63.6	65.9	68.2	70.5	72.7	75.0	77.3	79.5	81.8	84.1	86.4	88.6	90.9	93.2	95.5	97.7
HEIGHT in/cm	Underweight				Healthy				Overweight				Obese				Extremely obese							
5'0" - 152.4	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
5'1" - 154.9	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	36	37	38	39	40
5'2" - 157.4	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
5'3" - 160.0	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
5'4" - 162.5	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
5'5" - 165.1	16	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	33	34	35	35
5'6" - 167.6	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	33	34	34
5'7" - 170.1	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	33	33
5'8" - 172.7	15	16	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	32	32
5'9" - 175.2	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31
5'10" - 177.8	14	15	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	30
5'11" - 180.3	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30
6'0" - 182.8	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	29
6'1" - 185.4	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28
6'2" - 187.9	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27
6'3" - 190.5	12	13	13	14	15	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	26
6'4" - 193.0	12	12	13	14	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	23	24	25	25	26

Regular exercise is known to lower your blood pressure by nearly 10 mm Hg



Be Physically Active

Physical activity not only helps control hypertension, it also helps you manage your weight, strengthen your heart and lower your stress level. A healthy weight, a strong heart and general emotional health are all good for your blood pressure. It is important to have a well-rounded exercise routine including cardiovascular and strength exercises.

You should aim for:

- 150 minutes of moderate activity per week such as hiking, walking, dancing, light gardening, light weight lifting
- **Or** 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week. Jogging 12 mins/mile or faster, swimming, bicycling 10 mph or faster, vigorous basketball or vigorous weight lifting
- **Or** a combination of the above

Find something you like. You are more likely to continue to exercise regularly if you enjoy the activity. These activities are especially beneficial when done regularly:

- Brisk walking, hiking or stair-climbing
- Jogging, running, bicycling, rowing or swimming
- Fitness classes at your appropriate level
- Activities such as team sports, a dance class or fitness games

Quick test for intensity:

To make the most out of your exercise routine, it is important to make sure you are working at the correct intensity level. If you can exchange brief sentences easily while performing the activity, but not a comfortable or lengthy conversation, your intensity level is likely on target.

Take baby steps:

If you are not currently physically active, start small. Even 10-minute bouts of exercise can have a positive effect on your cardiovascular system. Start by incorporating more movement into your day with daily walking breaks.

Create habits that stick by associating the activity with a time of day or finding a workout buddy to keep you accountable.

Myth Busters:

“High blood pressure runs in my family. There is nothing I can do to prevent it.”

MYTH! Hypertension can run in families. However, [lifestyle choices](#) have allowed many people with a family history of high blood pressure to avoid it themselves.

“I don’t use table salt, so I’m in control of my sodium intake and my blood pressure”

MYTH! In some people, sodium can increase blood pressure. But [controlling sodium](#) means more than just putting down the salt shaker. It also means checking labels, because up to 75 percent of the sodium we consume is hidden in processed foods like tomato sauce, soups, condiments, canned foods.

“I was diagnosed with high blood pressure, but have been maintaining lower readings, so I can stop taking my medication”

MYTH! If lifestyle changes have lowered your blood pressure you may be able to reduce or stop your medications, but you must discuss with your doctor before stopping your medications.



Reduce Stress:

In addition to the emotional discomfort we feel when faced with a stressful situation, our bodies react by releasing stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol) into the blood. These hormones prepare the body for the “fight or flight” response by making the heart beat faster and constricting blood vessels to get more blood to the core of the body instead of the extremities. This response in turn raises your blood pressure.

Tips to help manage stress:

- Change your expectations. Give yourself time to get things done. Time management can help prevent you from trying to pack too much into your day.
- Recognize where you have control. You can't control all the outside events of your life, but you can change how you handle them emotionally.
- Take care of your mood by taking 15-20 mins a day to sit quietly, exercise or visit with friends.
- Whether it's volunteer opportunities or cooking your favorite foods, participate in activities and intentionally enjoy them.
- Ask for help! Find someone you can talk with who can support you. Through our medical plan you are offered up to 8 EAP confidential sessions per year.

Sources & Additional Resources:

[American Heart Association](#)

[Mayo Clinic](#)

[National Institute on Health](#)

[Smokefree.gov](#)

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