



PREHYPERTENSION

Prehypertension is the term for slightly elevated blood pressure. Left unnoticed, it generally turns into high blood pressure (hypertension). Both prehypertension and high blood pressure increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Your blood pressure reading has two numbers: the upper number measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats (systolic pressure). The lower number measures the pressure in your arteries between beats (diastolic pressure). Prehypertension is a systolic pressure from 120 to 139 mm Hg or a diastolic pressure from 80 to 89 mm Hg.

You can't see or feel prehypertension, but by knowing your blood pressure numbers, you can take action to keep the numbers low, thus preventing hypertension.

The only way to detect prehypertension is to keep track of your blood pressure readings. Your blood pressure will be checked at each doctor's visit; check it at home with a home monitoring device or at your neighborhood fire station. Measurements from a machine in a pharmacy or grocery can be unreliable.

Sometimes an underlying condition causes blood pressure to rise, including sleep apnea, kidney disease or thyroid disease. Certain medications — including birth control pills, cold remedies, pain relievers and prescription drugs — also may cause blood pressure to rise. Most of the time, high blood pressure develops over many years without a specific identifiable cause.

Risk factors include:

- Overweight or obese – increases the blood amount needed to supply oxygen and nutrients to your tissues, increasing the force on your artery walls.
- Age - adults who are healthy at age 55 have a 90 percent chance of developing high blood pressure.
- Gender - more common in men than women.
- Family history
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Diet high in sodium
- Tobacco use
- Excessive alcohol use
- Chronic conditions – high cholesterol, diabetes and sleep apnea

Limiting these risk factors with weight loss, exercise and other healthy lifestyle changes can often control prehypertension and prevent high blood pressure, setting the stage for a lifetime of better health.

Sources: americanheart.org; webmd.com; mayoclinic.com

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Additional centers opening soon in Valdosta, Tifton and Waycross.

TAKE THE CHALLENGE

Welcome to our new monthly feature: Take the Challenge. The goal of the Challenge is to turn simple lifestyle changes into lifelong, healthy habits.

Each month, you will be *challenged* in an informative way to learn how to improve your overall health and wellness. By participating, you'll learn how to:

- Increase your activity level
- Eat a healthier diet
- Manage stress
- Make improved lifestyle choices to benefit you and your family

Treating Burns

Treating a burn begins with stopping the burning process. Cool the burned area with cool running water for 5 minutes. If an ambulance has been called, continue with the running water until they arrive.

For blistering, sloughing, or charred (blackened) skin, go to the nearest emergency room right away. If severe, call 911.

Victims with burns to the face, hands, feet or genitals need emergency medical assistance – call 911 immediately.

Mild burns with reddened skin but no blisters may be treated with a topical burn ointment or spray after stopping the burning process.

What NOT to do:

- Do not pierce blisters.
- Do not peel off burned skin.
- Do not peel away any clothing stuck to the burn.
- Do not use butter, oil, or any other "folk remedies" on burns.

Sources: firstaid.about.com; life.familyeducation.com



February is American Heart Month

Nearly half a million Americans still die from heart attacks each year. Review some of the facts about heart attacks by taking the quiz below:

Quiz:

1. Discomfort or a heavy feeling in the chest can signal a heart attack.

True False

2. Women do not frequently experience heart attacks.

True False

3. African-American women die of heart attacks at the same rate as white women.

True False

4. Some people who are experiencing the symptoms of a heart attack may wait hours or days before seeking medical care.

True False

5. Being treated within about an hour of the first symptoms can make a significant difference.

True False

6. Many heart attack victims say their heart attack wasn't what they'd expected.

True False

7. Calling 9-1-1 for chest pain alone would be a waste of the emergency personnel's time.

True False

8. Most heart attacks occur in people over 65.

True False

Answers:

1. True. Chest **discomfort** is the most common symptom of heart attacks.

2. False. Heart disease is the **#1 killer** of American women.

3. False. Rates are **1/3 higher** for African-American women.

4. True. Many do not **recognize** the symptoms as life threatening.

5. True. Death and heart damage can often be avoided when treatment begins **within an hour** of symptoms.

6. True. The pain is **rarely** sharp and strong, causing a delay in seeking treatment.

7. False. Better **safe** than sorry – always!

8. True. But, **45%** are under age 65.

Source: American Heart Association; National Institute of Health

Did you know?

Vitamin C can significantly reduce High Blood Pressure

According to a recent study from Boston University School of Medicine and Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University, taking 500 mg of Vitamin C each day for 1 month can decrease blood pressure by 9%. The 500 mg of Vitamin C used daily to produce these results is considered a low dosage with little risk of side effects. It is also an inexpensive dietary supplement, yet yields blood pressure reductions that compare with prescription medications. So eat fruits and vegetables high in vitamin C daily for your health – and as always, check with your doctor before making this type of change to your diet.

Helpful Links

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org

WebMD

www.webmd.com

Mayo Clinic

www.mayoclinic.com

Valentine Meringues

- 4 large egg whites
- 1/4 tsp cream of tartar
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups fat-free whipped topping
- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- Preheat oven to 250°

Beat egg whites (medium speed until foamy). Add cream of tartar. Mix until thickened. Add sugar –

1 tablespoon at a time - at high speed, until stiff peaks form. Drop large spoonfuls of meringue onto a

parchment-lined baking sheet, making six piles. Using the back of spoon, shape the meringues in to nests.

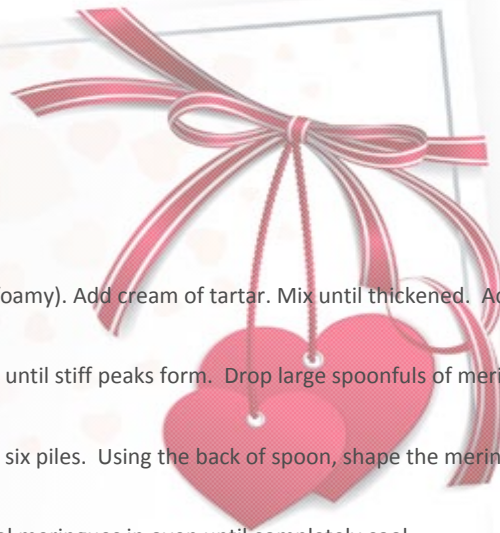
Bake for 1 hour. Turn off oven and cool meringues in oven until completely cool.

Spoon whipped topping into each nest. Add strawberries. Drizzle fat-free chocolate syrup over the top. Serve immediately.

Serves 6

Per Serving Calories 151, Calories from Fat 1, Total Fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 37mg, Carbs 37mg,

Fiber 0.6mg, Protein 2.5g



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Tips To Get You Started

Read Labels

Read all the labels – you will be surprised at the amounts of sodium in some of your favorite food items. It may take you longer to get through your grocery trip the first time, but as you become more familiar with the foods to avoid, with high sodium content (regular canned soup), you will be back up to speed in no time – and healthier.

Make Better Choices

Now that you are reading labels, choose alternative foods items. Low-sodium versions of many of your favorites are available. Choosing the low-sodium version may cut the sodium in half from the regular food. Get familiar with other choices you can make:

- Fresh seafood - choose salmon over shrimp and save 78 mg, per 3 ounces
- Fresh fruit - choose plums or pears over grapefruit or papaya and save 9 mg, per ½ cup
- Meats/Poultry – pork tenderloin beats turkey, chicken and beef with only 42 mg of sodium, per 3 ounces
- Fresh Vegetables - Turnips, celery & artichokes have the highest sodium levels, by far, per ½ cup
- Nuts – most have less than one mg, but cashews and peanuts have 6mg per ¼ cup

Eating Out

Most restaurants offer heart-healthy choices on their menus. If not on the menu, ask the wait staff – some chefs are willing to prepare your meal using the lowest sodium items available. Always ask if MSG is used in preparation of food – 1 teaspoon contains 492 mg of sodium.

Cooking At Home

Use some version of a salt substitute when cooking. Herbs and spices are also a great substitute for salt to add flavor to dishes. *See right for more tips...*

Step Away From the Salt Shaker!

NEVER salt food before tasting – this is a mistake most of us have made at some point. If you must salt your food, use sparingly by shaking a small amount into the palm of your hand first, then add to the food. Remember, one teaspoon of table salt is the maximum recommended daily amount.

Low-Sodium Cookbooks and D.A.S.H. (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)

Check out some of the low-sodium cookbooks to help you find alternative ways of cooking that don't take away the taste and flavor of your favorite dishes. Web search *low sodium cookbooks*, go to *dashdiet.org* or your favorite bookstore for helpful information.

Who We Are

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Cooking At Home Tips

Try these flavoring spices and herbs:

For Meat, Poultry, and Fish -

- Beef: Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme
- Lamb: Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, mint
- Pork: Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, oregano
- Veal: Bay leaf, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, oregano
- Chicken: Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, poultry seasoning, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
- Fish: Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, lemon juice, marjoram, paprika, pepper

For Vegetables -

- Carrots: Cinnamon, cloves, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage
- Corn: Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, parsley
- Green Beans: Dill, curry powder, lemon juice, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme



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February Low Sodium Diary

Remember – your body needs small amounts of sodium to function properly. Log any modifications regarding sodium intake you make each day. Even if it is “rinsed the can of green beans”. That’s a great victory. Stay with it and you will begin to feel the effects that lowering sodium intake can have on how you feel. Oh, and what a nice Valentine’s gift to your **heart**.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	1	7	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28