



Fact Sheet

Keeping Blood Pressure Healthy

When your heart beats, it pumps blood to all parts of your body through arteries. Blood pressure measures how forcefully the blood pushes on the artery walls as it flows through. Your blood pressure may be higher or lower at different times of the day. It is normal to have higher blood pressure for a short amount of time, such as after you exercise, but when your blood pressure stays high, it becomes a serious medical condition. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is sometimes called "the silent killer" because it has no symptoms.

You can prevent and control high blood pressure with four steps:

1. Learn your risk.

Tell your doctor about your family health history and ask about your risk for high blood pressure.

2. Know your numbers.

The two numbers in a blood pressure reading tell you how much force is pushing against your artery walls when your heart is squeezing and when it is resting. The top number is called the systolic number. The bottom number is called the diastolic number. A normal blood pressure is 120 over 80, or lower.

3. Know when to get emergency care.

When blood pressure gets too high, you are in danger. If the top number goes above 180, or the bottom number goes above 110, you need to call 9-1-1 immediately for an ambulance.

4. Take care of yourself.

Choose a healthy lifestyle that includes healthy eating, daily exercise and plenty of sleep.

You will need to manage your blood pressure all your life. Remind yourself that the healthy choices you make each day help protect your heart, your body, and your life.

Learn more by visiting www.phelpscountyhealth.com, Facebook, Twitter, or by calling (573) 458-6010. The Phelps/Maries County Health Department – caring for your family, caring for our community, caring for YOU!



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