

Session 4



Control Your Blood Pressure

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will learn:

- What blood pressure is and what level to aim for
- What a stroke is and what the warning signs are
- The dangers of eating too much salt and sodium
- Steps to eat less salt and sodium

Materials and Supplies

To conduct this session, you'll need:

- *With Every Heartbeat Is Life* manual and picture cards
- Blackboard and chalk, dry erase board, or several large pieces of paper, a marker, and tape
- Small amount of salt
- Ms. Diane's seasoning mixture (page 4.37). Prepare enough to give a small sample to each participant in a little bag or cup.

NOTE



(Optional) **Arrange** for a health professional to come to take blood pressure readings at the conclusion of the session.

Handouts

Give each participant these handouts during this session:

- If Stroke Happens, Act F.A.S.T. (page 4.26)
- List of places to get blood pressure checked
- My Healthy Heart Wallet Card (page 4.27)
- Pregnancy and Your Heart Health (page 4.28-4.30)
- Healthy Habits To Control Your Blood Pressure (page 4.31)
- Check the Food Label for Sodium (page 4.32)
- Darnell's Food Choices (pages 4.33-4.35)

- Sodium in Foods (page 4.36)
 - Eat Less Salt and Sodium (pages 4.37-4.38)
 - Use Herbs and Spices Instead of Salt (page 4.39)
 - Tips for Taking High Blood Pressure Medicine (page 4.40-4.41)
 - Soul Food Makeover: Vegetable Stew Recipe (pages 4.42)
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Before This Session

Prepare a list of places where people can get their blood pressure checked. You may find the information at your local health department, hospital, or clinic.

Session Outline

Introducing the Session

1. Welcome
2. Review of Last Week's Session
3. About This Session

Conducting the Session

1. The Facts Don't Lie
2. Understanding Blood Pressure and Stroke
3. Lowering High Blood Pressure
4. Salt and Sodium: How Much Do We Need?
5. Food Label Activity: Sodium
6. Shake the Salt and Sodium Habit
7. Easy on the Alcohol
8. Manage Your Blood Pressure With Medicine
9. Soul Food Makeover: Vegetable Stew Recipe

Review of Today's Key Points

Weekly Pledge

Blood Pressure Check (Optional)

Closing

Introducing the Session

1. Welcome

DO **Welcome** participants to the session

2. Review of Last Week's Session

SAY Last week, we talked about why you should be physically active. What benefits do you remember?

NOTE



Allow about 3 minutes for participants to respond. **Write** their answers on the blackboard, dry erase board, or large piece of paper taped to the wall.

DO **Add** the following benefits if the participants don't mention them.

Physical activity can:

- Strengthen your heart and lungs
- Build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Help you feel better about yourself
- Help you control your weight
- Help you control your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar
- Help you sleep and manage stress better
- Improve your mental health and mood
- Improve your ability to do daily activities
- Lower your risk for diabetes, heart disease, and cancer

ASK Would any of you like to share what you did to be more active?

What problems did you face (like too little time or not getting family support)?

How did you solve them?

NOTE



Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond and share with the group what they did and what barriers they faced.

ASK

Has anyone completed the family health history?

DO

(Optional)

Give a prize to participants who've completed the history.

ASK

Does anyone want to share what you've learned about your family health history?

NOTE



Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond.

3. About This Session

SAY

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "The time is always right to do what is right."

ASK

What does this quote mean to you?

NOTE



Allow 5 minutes for participants to respond.

SAY

Today's session is about the steps you can take to control your blood pressure.

Conducting the Session

1. The Facts Don't Lie

SAY High blood pressure increases your risk of getting heart disease and of having a stroke.

The likelihood of having high blood pressure increases with age.

About 1 in 5 adults with high blood pressure don't know they have it.

A type of high blood pressure, called preeclampsia, happens only during pregnancy. It doubles a woman's risk of getting heart disease later in life.

For most of us, high blood pressure and strokes are preventable.

SAY Let's take a closer look at high blood pressure in the African American community:

- About 40 percent of African American adults have high blood pressure.
- Less than half of all African Americans with high blood pressure have it under control, such as by taking blood pressure medicine.
- African American women are more likely to develop preeclampsia, compared to white women, and three times more likely to die from it.
- African Americans are twice as likely to have a stroke as whites. We're also more likely to have strokes at younger ages and to have more severe strokes.

2. Understanding Blood Pressure and Stroke

DO **Show** picture card 4.1.



PICTURE

SAY Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of your arteries.

High blood pressure is also called “hypertension.”

If you have high blood pressure, your heart has to pump harder than it should to get blood to all parts of your body.

NOTE

We measure blood pressure in millimeters of mercury, which we write as mmHg. When you see mmHg, say “millimeters of mercury.”

DO **Show** picture card 4.2.



PICTURE

SAY A blood pressure reading has two numbers, such as “120 over 80.” The first or top number is your systolic (sis-TOL-ik) pressure. That’s your pressure during a heartbeat. The other number, called diastolic (di-a-STOL-ik), is the pressure between beats, when your heart is resting.

SAY It’s important to keep track of your blood pressure numbers. Write down your numbers every time you have your blood pressure checked.

ASK Do you know your blood pressure numbers?

NOTE

Allow about 2 minutes for participants to respond.

- SAY** For most adults, a healthy blood pressure is usually below 120/80 mmHg.
- If your numbers are consistently higher, you may have elevated or high blood pressure and may need to go on medication.
- Talk to your health care provider about what your numbers are and write them down.
- If your health care provider says that you have high blood pressure, ask about how you can lower it or keep it in control.

DO **Show** picture card 4.3.



- SAY** High blood pressure can lead to a stroke, heart attack, kidney problems, blindness, heart failure, and dying at a young age.
- High blood pressure increases your risk of developing a serious condition called congestive heart failure. Heart failure doesn't mean your heart has stopped working—it means it can't pump enough blood to keep your body working normally.
- African Americans are more likely than other racial or ethnic groups to have heart failure, to have symptoms of it at a younger age, and to die from heart failure.
-
- SAY** We call high blood pressure the “silent killer” because it often has no symptoms but can still kill you.

SAY High blood pressure is the main risk factor for stroke. Others are diabetes, heart disease, smoking, alcohol and illegal drug use, and sickle cell disease.

Having pregnancy-related high blood pressure increases women's risk of having a stroke, even decades after being pregnant.

African Americans are twice as likely to have a stroke as whites.

We're also more likely to have a stroke at a younger age and to have a more severe stroke.

But we can all lower our risk of having a stroke!

ASK Do you know anyone who has had a stroke?

NOTE

Allow a few minutes for participants to respond.

DO **Show** picture card 4.4.



PICTURE

SAY A stroke, also called a brain attack, can happen when a blood vessel bursts or when a clot blocks your arteries and damages brain cells.

A stroke is very serious and can disable or even kill you.

The warning signs of a stroke can develop over hours or days, or can happen suddenly.

The warning signs of a stroke include:

- Numbness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Confusion, trouble talking, and difficulty understanding others
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, and loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache

DO **Give** participants the handout "If Stroke Happens, Act F.A.S.T." (page 4.26).



HANDOUT

SAY When someone is having a stroke, every minute counts. It's like putting out a fire quickly to stop it from spreading—treating a stroke quickly reduces brain damage. Recognizing the signs of a stroke means you can act fast to save a life—maybe even your own.

Stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. Stroke patients who don't get to the hospital in time may not receive those treatments because it's too late for the treatments to help.

SAY If someone is having a stroke, think F.A.S.T:

F—Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A—Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T—Time: If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

SAY Ministrokes, called “transient ischemic attacks or “TIAs,” have the same symptoms as a stroke, but they don't last as long and usually don't cause brain damage. A ministroke is a warning that a stroke may happen in the future.

Ministrokes may last a few minutes or an entire day and then go away. Don't ignore the signs. As with a heart attack, act immediately if you or someone you know has stroke symptoms. Call 9-1-1 right away to help prevent serious problems.

DO **Show** picture card 4.5.



PICTURE

SAY Measuring blood pressure is easy and doesn't hurt. Have yours checked at least once a year, or more often if you have high blood pressure.

Your health care provider may ask you to check your blood pressure at home if you have a home blood pressure monitor. You may be able to send readings to your doctor's office electronically.

DO

Give participants:

- A list of places (such as clinics and hospitals) to get their blood pressure checked.
- The “My Healthy Heart Wallet Card” handout (page 4.27)



SAY

Ask for your numbers each time you have your blood pressure checked. Keep a record of each reading on the wallet card.

Anyone who’s pregnant or planning a pregnancy needs to take some extra steps to make sure they have a heart healthy pregnancy. It’s very important for the health of the baby and the mom!

DO

Give each participant the “Pregnancy and Your Heart Health” handout (page 4.28-4.30).



ASK

May I have a volunteer to read the first section on blood pressure?

SAY

Please read the rest of the handout when you get home.

ASK

Do you know anyone you can share this handout with, to help them have a heart healthy pregnancy?

NOTE



Allow a few minutes for participants to respond.

3. Lowering High Blood Pressure

DO

Ask participants to raise their hand if someone in their family has high blood pressure.

SAY

If a member of your family has high blood pressure, you’re at greater risk of getting it, too. Even if you don’t have it now, you could still get it in the future.

But the good news is that you can take steps now to lower your blood pressure or keep it from rising. Let’s find out how.

DO **Give** each participant the “Healthy Habits To Control Your Blood Pressure” handout (page 4.31).



SAY I’ll read part of the handout now but please read the rest when you get home.

DO **Read** the text in bold in the handout out loud.

ASK What could you and your family or friends do to control your blood pressure, or what do you do already?

NOTE



Allow 3 minutes for participants to respond.

4. Salt and Sodium: How Much Do We Need?

SAY Eating food with less salt and sodium can help control your blood pressure. Sodium is the part of salt that affects our health. Almost all of the sodium we eat is in the form of salt.

We often use the words salt and sodium to mean the same thing. For example, a nutrition label on a package will list “sodium,” while the front of the package may say “no salt added” or “unsalted.”

SAY Some people, including many African Americans, are more sensitive to sodium and may need to be especially careful about how much of it they eat.

African Americans should have no more than 1,500 mg of sodium a day, including the sodium from processed foods.

If your health care provider has told you to have even less sodium, follow their advice.

Most people in the United States get about 3,400 milligrams of sodium each day. That’s about 1½ teaspoons of salt.

DO Now **show** 1½ teaspoons of salt.

DO **Show** picture card 4.6.



PICTURE

SAY Let's talk about what foods are high in sodium. More than two-thirds of the sodium we eat comes from processed and restaurant foods.

Some foods that are often high in sodium are:

- Prepared meats
- Prepackaged rice and pasta dishes
- Pizza
- Frozen dinners
- Salad dressings, seasonings, sauces
- Soups

SAY I'm going to read some tips for avoiding sodium. How many of these do you do already?

NOTE



Give participants a few minutes to respond after you **read** the following list.

1. Read food labels and choose low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added foods.
2. Eat fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added foods instead of preseasoned or processed meats, poultry, and vegetables.
3. Try not to use premade sauces, mixes, and “instant” products, such as rice, noodles, and ready-made pasta.
4. Rinse canned foods such as tuna and beans to remove some of the sodium.
5. Eat at home often so you can cook from scratch.
6. Don't use salt when you cook pasta, rice, or hot cereal.
7. Use herbs and spices instead of salt.
8. Eat a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables.

9. Eat foods that are high in potassium to help reduce the effects of sodium on your blood pressure. A wide variety of foods are rich in potassium, including dried apricots, orange juice, acorn squash, potatoes, spinach, tomatoes, broccoli, lentils, kidney beans, soybeans, and nuts.
10. Use a salt substitute, which often has potassium chloride or magnesium chloride instead of sodium chloride (salt). (If you have diabetes, kidney disease, or heart disease, check with your health care provider before using salt substitutes.)

5. Food Label Activity: Sodium



ACTIVITY

DO **Show** picture card 4.7.



PICTURE

SAY Checking the label on packaged foods is one of the best ways to make healthy choices. In this session, we'll learn how to use the food label to choose foods that are lower in sodium.

DO **Give** participants the "Check the Food Label for Sodium" handout (page 4.32).



HANDOUT

SAY The food label has the serving size and number of servings in the container.

It also gives the amount of calories, sodium, saturated fat, and cholesterol in one serving. We'll talk about calories, saturated fat, and cholesterol in the next two sessions.

DO **Point** out where the Percent Daily Value is located on the food label.

SAY The Percent Daily Value helps you compare products. It tells you if a food is high or low in various nutrients. Remember—it's easier than you might think to have too much sodium in a day. Choose foods with a lower Percent Daily Value for sodium. A Percent Daily Value of **5 or less is low**, and a Percent Daily Value of **20 or more is high**. Once you get into the habit of looking at food labels, it will be easy.

SAY Let's take a close look at the Nutrition Facts on an actual label to find the amount of sodium. Let's go back to the "Check the Food Label for Sodium" handout.

DO **Point** again to picture card 4.7.



PICTURE

SAY The Percent Daily Value for sodium in packaged noodle soup is circled on the food label.

The sodium content of the same type of food can vary, depending on how the food is packaged or its brand. Compare food labels to choose foods that are lower in sodium.

SAY Look at the bottom of the handout. See the Percent Daily Value for low-sodium soup and for packaged noodle soup? Which is lower sodium?

One serving of low-sodium soup has only 9 percent of the Daily Value for sodium.

One serving of packaged noodle soup has 34 percent of the Daily Value for sodium—almost four times more sodium!



SAY Think of the Percent Daily Value like a budget. You have a daily budget of \$100 for all of your sodium needs for one day. When you spend \$34 (Percent Daily Value) on one serving, that serving has cost you more than one-third of your daily budget. That's okay for a whole meal, but it's not okay for just one serving. You now have only \$66 left and could easily go over your sodium budget for the day.

More Information**The DASH Eating Plan To Lower Your Blood Pressure**

One eating plan that can help you control your blood pressure is Dietary Approaches To Stop Hypertension (DASH).

It recommends having:

- More fruits and vegetables
- Fat-free or low-fat milk products
- Whole-grain foods
- Fish, poultry, lean meats, or beans
- Nuts and seeds

It also recommends limiting salt, sodium, sweets, sweetened drinks, fats, and oils.

DASH menus and recipes are lower in sodium than people eat normally. They provide 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day. But the recipes also come with options for people who are trying to limit their sodium even more, to 1,500 milligrams per day.

For more information: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH.

SAY Choosing and preparing foods that are lower in salt and sodium may help prevent or lower high blood pressure. Eating fruits and vegetables, using fat-free or low-fat milk products, and avoiding fatty foods may also help lower blood pressure.

Some people don't like milk products or have a problem digesting lactose. There are lactose-free products and nondairy products that are low in fat, such as low-fat soy or oat milk.

SAY Let's try an activity that will help us choose foods that are low in salt and sodium. First, I'm going to describe a situation that may apply to you or to family members. Then, using food labels, we're going to learn how to choose lower-sodium foods.

DO **Give** participants the “Darnell’s Food Choices” handout (pages 4.33-4.35).



SAY During a recent visit to his health care provider, Darnell learned that he has high blood pressure. The provider told him to cut back on the amount of sodium he eats.
Let’s use the food labels in the handout to help Darnell choose food that is lower in sodium.

DO **Ask** these questions. **Give** the correct answer after participants guess.

Question	Correct Answers
When buying juice, should Darnell choose tomato juice or orange juice?	Orange juice
At a neighbor’s picnic, should Darnell choose barbecued chicken or roasted chicken (skinless and with no added salt)?	Herb-seasoned roasted chicken (skinless and with no added salt)
Should Darnell buy frozen peas or canned peas?	Frozen peas
Should Darnell eat a buttermilk biscuit or an English muffin?	English muffin
Should Darnell snack on a handful of salted mixed nuts or a handful of unsalted, dry-roasted mixed nuts?	Unsalted, dry-roasted mixed nuts

6. Shake the Salt and Sodium Habit

DO **Give** participants the “Sodium in Foods” handout (page 4.36).



HANDOUT

ASK Does anyone often eat foods from the right side of the page?

DO **Ask** the person to name a lower sodium food from the left side that they could eat instead.

SAY Let’s review tips to help you cut back on salt and sodium.

DO **Give** participants the “Eat Less Salt and Sodium” handout (pages 4.37-4.38) and **review** the tips on how to cut back on salt and sodium when shopping, cooking, and eating.



HANDOUT

SAY Here’s a sample of Ms. Diane’s secret recipe from the bottom of the “Eat Less Salt and Sodium” handout. Fill an empty salt shaker with this seasoning mixture, and put it on your table. Tell your family to try it instead of salt.

DO **Give** each group member a sample of Ms. Diane’s seasoning mixture.

ASK Why is it hard for you to cut back on salt and sodium?

NOTE



Allow 3 minutes for participants to respond. **Write** their answers on the blackboard, dry erase board, or large piece of paper taped to the wall. Then **write** down some possible solutions. See the “Salt Solutions Examples”

Salt Solution Examples

Problems and Solutions

Problems	Solutions
The food has no flavor.	Use herbs or spices to add flavor. See the “Use Herbs and Spices Instead of Salt” handout (page 4.39).
Family members will get upset.	Cut back on salt slowly. Use less salt each time you cook so everyone can get used to the taste.
Adding salt is a habit that’s hard to break.	Give yourself time to get used to using less salt. Choose brands that are lower in salt. Take the salt shaker off the table.

7. Easy on the Alcohol

SAY

Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure.

It can also harm your liver, brain, and heart. Alcoholic drinks also contain extra calories that make controlling your weight difficult.

If you don’t drink alcohol, don’t start. Pregnant women shouldn’t drink any alcohol.

If you drink alcohol, drink only a moderate amount.

That means:

- Men should have no more than two drinks a day.
- Women should have no more than one drink a day.

ASK What do you think counts as one drink?

NOTE

Allow 2 minutes for participants to respond.

SAY

One drink is:

- 12 ounces of beer. This is about 5 percent alcohol. (Some beers and malt liquor have more alcohol than that.) Regular beer is 150 calories; light is 100 calories.
- 5 ounces of wine. This is about 12 percent alcohol and 100 calories.
- 1½ ounces of liquor. This is about 40 percent alcohol and has 100 calories.



8. Manage Your Blood Pressure With Medicine

SAY If you have high blood pressure, making the lifestyle changes we just discussed may not be enough to lower your blood pressure. You may also need medications.

DO **Give** participants the “Tips for Taking High Blood Pressure Medicine” handout (page 4.40-4.41).



ASK Do any of you take medicines for high blood pressure?

DO **Read** the handout out loud.

ASK If you're taking medication for high blood pressure, how can you help your medicine work better?



Allow a few minutes for participants to respond. **Write** their answers on the blackboard, dry erase board, or paper taped to the wall.

DO **Add** the following if they're not mentioned:

- Ask your health care provider the name of your medicine and how to take it.
- Take your medicine the way your provider tells you.
- Tell your health care provider the names of all other medicines, home remedies, herbs, and supplements you take.
- Tell your provider if the medicine makes you feel strange or sick.
- Refill your prescription before you run out.
- Have your blood pressure checked to see if the medicine is working for you.
- Keep taking the medicine as your health care provider tells you, even if your blood pressure is okay.

More Information

- Many people, especially African Americans, may need to take more than one medicine to control their blood pressure.
- African Americans are more likely than others to get side effects from taking a blood pressure medicine called ACE inhibitors, such as captopril, lisinopril, or enalapril.

9. Soul Food Makeover: Vegetable Stew Recipe



DO **Give** participants the “Use Herbs and Spices Instead of Salt” handout (page 4.39). **Ask** them to use some of the herbs and spices in place of salt when they cook this week.



DO **Give** participants the “Soul Food Makeover: Vegetable Stew Recipe” handout (pages 4.42). **Ask** them to prepare the recipe during the coming week. **Tell** them that using this recipe will give them a chance to practice some of the ideas from the session.



Review of Today's Key Points

SAY Let's review what we learned today.

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of your arteries.

What is a normal blood pressure?

A normal blood pressure is usually below 120/80 mmHg.

What is high blood pressure?

If your numbers are consistently higher, you may have elevated or high blood pressure. Talk with your health care provider about what your numbers mean for you.

Why is high blood pressure dangerous?

High blood pressure can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney problems, eye problems, and dying at a young age.

What can you do to help make your blood pressure medicine work better?

Eat more fruits and vegetables, cut back on salt and sodium, lose weight, and be more physically active. Take your medicine as your health care provider tells you. Talk to your provider about side effects.

What is a stroke?

A stroke can happen when a blood vessel bursts or when a clot blocks your arteries and brain cells die. Strokes are also called brain attacks. They're very serious and can disable or kill you.

How can you prevent high blood pressure?

Be physically active, eat healthy, don't smoke, watch your weight, limit your alcohol, control stress, and check your blood pressure. If your health care provider has prescribed medicine for high blood pressure, take the medicine the way your provider has told you to.

Weekly Pledge



SAY You've learned a lot today about how to control your blood pressure. Please think of one change you'll make in your everyday life for your blood pressure. This will be your pledge for the week.

SAY Be specific about **what** you'll do, **how** you'll do it, and **when** you'll start.

Here are some examples:

- I'll get my blood pressure checked within the next month at my health care provider's office.
- I'll join a walking group or take an exercise class at my church next week.
- I'll read food labels the next time I shop and choose foods that are lower in sodium.
- I'll rinse canned foods with water before I cook or eat them, starting today.
- I'll take the salt shaker off the table, starting today.

SAY Write your pledges on the back of the "Eat Less Salt and Sodium" handout. Keep this handout in a special place so you can review your pledge and keep your goal in mind.

NOTE



Allow 5 minutes for participants to think of a pledge and write it down.

SAY Would anyone like to share their pledge with the group?

NOTE



Write down pledges so everyone can see them.

SAY *(Optional)*

Thinking about your values helps you make the changes needed to control your blood pressure. Remember that your values are qualities that you feel are important.

Today's value is openness. Being open means you're willing to consider making changes to improve your health, such as cutting back on foods high in salt and sodium, quitting smoking, and being more physically active.

SAY As today's quote says, "The time is always right to do what is right." I hope all of you will encourage your family and friends to be open to controlling their blood pressure.

ASK How can you use openness, or another value, to help you keep your pledge?

NOTE



Allow 3 minutes for participants to share their thoughts.

SAY We'll talk about how you did with your pledge at the next session. Remember to keep working on your pledge to be more physically active.

Blood Pressure Check *(Optional)*

DO **Have** a health professional come to the session to check participants' blood pressure.

SAY A health professional will now check your blood pressure, if you'd like.

DO **Ask** participants to write their blood pressure numbers on their wallet card.

Closing

SAY Thank you for coming today. What did you think of today's session?

NOTE



Wait to see if participants respond.

SAY I'm looking forward to seeing you at the next session. It will be about how to prevent and control high cholesterol.

Please continue to fill out your family health histories.

NOTE



Think about today's session. What worked and what didn't work? Have you decided to make any changes in your own life based on what you covered in today's session?



If a Stroke Happens, Act F.A.S.T.

F – Face Drooping

Ask the person to smile.
Does one side droop?



A – Arm Weakness

Ask the person to raise both arms.
Does one arm drift downward?



S – Speech Difficulty

Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence.
Are the words slurred?



T – Time to Call 9-1-1

If the person shows any of these signs,
call 9-1-1 immediately.





My Healthy Heart Wallet Card

Take Care of Your Heart



Check your:

blood pressure,
cholesterol, weight, waist
measure, and blood glucose

Name: _____

Try these tips for a healthy heart!

More	+ fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk products + physical activity
Less	- calories and saturated fat, - weight and waist measure
None	0 cigarettes = A healthy heart

FRONT

Talk to your health care provider about what these numbers mean!

A1C
7% or less

Date					
Value					

Blood glucose (fasting)
Less than 100

Date					
Value					

Blood tests to check sugar in blood for diabetes

Waist measurements
Men: 40 inches or less
Women: 35 inches or less

Date					
Value					

Weight

Date					
Value					

Blood Pressure
Less than 120/80 mmHg

Date					
Value					

Blood tests to measure fats in the blood

Total Cholesterol
Less than 200 mg/dL

Date					
Value					

LDL
Less than 100 mg/dL—ideal

Date					
Value					

HDL
More than 39 mg/dL

Date					
Value					

Triglycerides
Less than 150 mg/dL

Date					
Value					

BACK

FOLD 1

FOLD 2

Cut along dotted lines. Fold card in half and paste with a glue stick. (FOLD 1)
Fold in half again to make your own personal wallet card (FOLD 2)



Pregnancy and Your Heart Health

Pregnancy can be a very exciting time—and a time to make your health a priority. Here we talk about pregnancy-related heart health issues that may be of particular concern to African American women.

High blood pressure—even if you’ve had normal blood pressure

A type of high blood pressure that occurs only during pregnancy, generally in the second half, is called preeclampsia. More African American women develop it, compared to white women.

Having diabetes, being obese, and some other health problems make it more likely that you’ll get preeclampsia. But it’s important that your health care provider check you for preeclampsia even if you don’t have those problems. Although it’s rare, preeclampsia can quickly turn into a serious, even deadly condition, particularly for African American women.

Symptoms of preeclampsia

Women who have preeclampsia often don’t feel sick. However, some mild symptoms to watch for are:

- Your hands, face, or eyes look swollen.
- You suddenly (over 1 to 2 days) gain weight, or you gain more than 2 pounds a week.

Symptoms of severe preeclampsia include:

- A headache that doesn’t go away
- Trouble breathing
- Belly pain on your right side below your ribs or pain in your right shoulder
- Peeing less than normal
- Nausea and vomiting
- Vision problems
- Feeling faint

Treatment varies depending on how bad your preeclampsia is.

- You may need to go to the hospital. If you get preeclampsia, you’re at a greater risk of having a miscarriage or of having a stillborn (born dead) baby.
- You’ll also need to take extra care of your heart after having your baby. Having preeclampsia increases the likelihood of having heart disease or a stroke later in life.





Pregnancy and Your Heart Health (continued)

Diabetes during pregnancy

A type of diabetes that occurs only during pregnancy, usually in the later weeks, is gestational diabetes. It causes your blood sugar (blood glucose) to get too high, even if you didn't have blood sugar problems before you became pregnant. Gestational diabetes goes away, but only after the baby is born.

Usually, gestational diabetes has no symptoms. If you do have symptoms, they may be mild, like being thirstier than normal or having to pee more often.

You're at greater risk of having gestational diabetes as an African American woman, and also if you:

- Are older than age 25
- Are overweight
- Have family members with type 2 diabetes
- Have a condition called polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)

Get tested and treated

If you have gestational diabetes, controlling your blood sugar levels will help you protect yourself and your baby. If not treated, gestational diabetes increases your risk of having a miscarriage or of having a stillborn baby.

It can also cause your baby to:

- Be born too early
- Be born with blood sugar and breathing problems
- Become overweight

If you have gestational diabetes, you're more likely to develop preeclampsia and to have diabetes later in life.

Protect yourself from gestational diabetes

You can do a lot to prevent gestational diabetes. It's particularly important before and during your pregnancy to eat healthy and be physically active. Talk to your doctor about programs that will help you do both. If you're overweight, try to lose weight before you get pregnant. (Pregnant women shouldn't try to lose weight.) Ask your health care provider how much weight you should gain during your pregnancy.



Pregnancy and Your Heart Health (continued)

Physical activity and pregnancy

Physical activity is good for your health, mood, and weight before, during, and after your pregnancy. If you're already active, stick with it as long as you're healthy. If you weren't active before you became pregnant, it's fine to begin now, gradually. But also ask your health care provider about what type of physical activities are safe during pregnancy and soon after delivery.

Smoking and pregnancy

It's important to quit smoking before you get pregnant. Smoking during pregnancy increases the chance of the baby being born with birth defects, too early, or underweight, or even dying. Babies whose mothers smoked when pregnant have a greater risk of dying from SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

If the mother continues to smoke after the baby is born, the baby is more likely to get chest colds, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma.

Make your health a priority

Most women in the United States have healthy pregnancies. However, serious illness (and even death) are becoming more common among pregnant women, particularly among African Americans. Heart disease is the leading cause of death during pregnancy or childbirth. Take care of your heart health. Your family needs you.



Healthy Habits To Control Your Blood Pressure

To control your blood pressure:

- 1. Aim for a healthy weight.** Try not to gain extra weight. If you're overweight, try losing weight slowly, about 1 to 2 pounds each week.
- 2. Be active every day for at least 30 minutes.** You can walk, dance, play sports, or do any activity you enjoy. Being active for at least 10 minutes, 3 times a day, works when you're pressed for time.
- 3. Eat less salt and sodium.** Buy foods marked "sodium free," "low sodium," or "reduced sodium." Take the salt shaker off the table.
- 4. Eat heart healthy.** Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Consider following the DASH eating plan.
- 5. Quit smoking.** Talk with your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit smoking. Also, try to avoid secondhand smoke (the smoke you inhale when others are smoking).
- 6. Manage stress.** To help manage stress, be more physically active; meditate; or talk with your friends, family, a mental health counselor, or your religious leader about how you're feeling.
- 7. Cut back on alcohol.** If you drink, have no more than two drinks a day if you're a man and one if you're a woman. Pregnant women shouldn't drink alcohol.
- 8. Take your medication.** If your health care provider has prescribed medicine for high blood pressure, be sure to take it as directed.
- 9. Get checked.** Get your blood pressure checked regularly. Write down and keep track of your blood pressure numbers.





Check the Food Label for Sodium

Food labels tell you what you need to know about choosing foods that are lower in sodium. Here’s a food label for packaged noodle soup.



1. Serving Size and Number of Servings

The serving size is ½ of the block of noodles. The package contains two servings. Remember, the numbers on the label are for one serving, not the whole package.

2. Amount Per Serving

The nutrient amounts are for one serving. So, if you eat the whole block of noodles, you’re eating two servings, and you need to double the nutrient amounts.

3. Percent Daily Value

The Percent Daily Value helps you compare products. It tells you if it has a lot of sodium. Choose products with the lowest Percent Daily Value for sodium: 5 percent or less is low, and 20 percent or more is high.

4. Nutrients

Here’s the amount of sodium in one serving. It’s listed in milligrams (mg).

Packaged Noodle Soup

Nutrition Facts	
2 servings per container	
Serving size	1/2 block (247g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	160
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 7g	9%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 710mg	31%
Total Carbohydrate 23g	8%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars < 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin D 10mcg	50%
Calcium 20mg	2%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 95mg	2%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

The Choice Is Yours – Compare!

Which one would you choose?

Low-sodium soup is lower in sodium than packaged soup.

Reduced-Sodium Soup

One serving (1 cup) of low-sodium soup has 430 mg of sodium and 19 percent of the Daily Value for sodium.

Packaged Noodle Soup

One serving, ½ block of the packaged noodle soup, has 710 mg of sodium and 31 percent of the Daily Value for sodium. This is nearly four times the amount of sodium in a serving of low-sodium soup.

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 430mg	19%

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 7g	9%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 710mg	31%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.



Darnell's Food Choices

During a recent visit to the health care provider, Darnell learned that he has high blood pressure. The provider told him to cut back on the amount of sodium he eats. Use the food labels to help Darnell choose foods that will help him follow his provider's advice. **Mark the number of your choice for each pair in the space between the labels.**

1. Tomato Juice

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	8 fl oz (248g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	40
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 630mg	27%
Total Carbohydrate 9g	3%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 2g	4%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 25mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 538mg	10%

Lower sodium choice

2. Orange Juice

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	8 fl oz (248g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 29g	11%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 21g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 2g	4%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 27mg	2%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 441mg	10%

3. Barbecued Chicken

Nutrition Facts	
1 servings per container	
Serving size	3 oz (85g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	150
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 5g	6%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 80mg	27%
Sodium 450mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 5g Added Sugars	10%
Protein 19g	38%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 11mg	0%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 247mg	6%

Lower sodium choice

4. Herb-Roasted Chicken

Nutrition Facts	
1 servings per container	
Serving size	3 oz (85g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	140
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 5g	6%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 100mg	33%
Sodium 30mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 0g	0%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 23g	46%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 7mg	0%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 265mg	6%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.



Darnell's Food Choices (continued)

5. Frozen Peas

Nutrition Facts	
3 servings per container	
Serving size	1/2 cup (80g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	60
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 45mg	2%
Total Carbohydrate 11g	4%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 19mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 87mg	2%

Lower sodium choice

6. Canned Peas

Nutrition Facts	
3 servings per container	
Serving size	1/2 cup (85g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	60
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 310mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	4%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 3g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 20mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 90mg	2%

7. Buttermilk Biscuit

Nutrition Facts	
5 servings per container	
Serving size	1 biscuit (63g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	210
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 7g	9%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 590mg	26%
Total Carbohydrate 34g	12%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 2g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 31mg	2%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 141mg	4%

Lower sodium choice

8. English Muffin

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size	1 muffin (58g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	130
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 250mg	11%
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 2g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 5g	10%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 95mg	8%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 63mg	2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.



Darnell's Food Choices (continued)

9. Mixed Nuts

Nutrition Facts	
12 servings per container	
Serving size	1 oz (28g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	170
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 15g	19%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 90mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 6g	12%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 26mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 169mg	4%

Lower sodium choice

10. Unsalted, Dry-Roasted Mixed Nuts

Nutrition Facts	
12 servings per container	
Serving size	1 oz (28g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	170
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 15g	19%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 6g	12%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 26mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 170mg	4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.



Sodium in Foods



Choose **MORE** Often

Foods **LOWER** in Sodium

- Chicken and turkey (with skin removed)
- Fresh fish or rinsed canned fish, such as tuna* or sardines
- Canned foods packed in water
- Reduced-sodium cheeses
- Low-salt or salt-free chips, nuts, and pretzels
- Plain rice, noodles, or pasta
- Homemade, low-sodium, or reduced-sodium soups
- Fresh, frozen, no-salt-added, or rinsed canned vegetables
- Spices, herbs, and flavorings such as cilantro, parsley, garlic powder, onion powder, vinegar, and chili powder



Choose **LESS** Often

Foods **HIGHER** in Sodium

- Smoked and cured meats such as bacon, ham, sausage, hotdogs, bologna, fatback, ham hocks, scrapple, and liver pudding
- Canned fish (not rinsed)[†] such as tuna and sardines, and salted/dried codfish*
- Frozen meals
- Canned foods packed in broth or salt[†]
- Most cheeses
- Salty chips, crackers, nuts, popcorn, and pretzels
- Quick-cooking rice or rice pilaf, potatoes, noodles, or macaroni and cheese
- Regular canned and instant soups
- Regular canned vegetables, pickles, olives, and pickled vegetables[†]
- Condiments and seasonings such as soy sauce, ketchup, garlic salt, seasoning salt, bouillon cubes, meat tenderizer, monosodium glutamate (MSG), and commercial Cajun or seafood seasonings

*Pregnant women and nursing mothers: Some types of fish may contain unsafe levels of mercury. Talk to your health care provider to find out the types of fish you can eat safely.

[†]Rinse canned foods to reduce the sodium.



Eat Less Salt and Sodium

Spice it up!

Discover how much flavor you can add by using spices and herbs.

To break your family's habit of using the salt shaker at the table, try Ms. Diane's secret recipe!

Look for other salt-free seasonings in the grocery store.

To make food taste good without salt, use cilantro, cumin, fresh garlic, parsley, onion, green pepper, oregano, and a dash of hot pepper. Everyone in my family now likes the taste of foods with less salt.





Eat Less Salt and Sodium (continued)

Take the Lead and Try These Simple Changes:

When Shopping

1. Buy fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added canned vegetables. Choose food packed in water instead of broth or salt.
2. Buy fresh garlic or garlic powder instead of garlic salt.
3. Choose foods labeled “low sodium,” “sodium free,” or “no salt added.”

When Cooking

1. Slowly cut back on the amount of salt added when cooking until you don’t use any.
2. Don’t add salt to the water when cooking beans, rice, pasta, or vegetables.
3. Cut back on meats high in sodium, such as bologna, ham, hotdogs, and sausage.
4. Rinse all canned products to reduce the amount of sodium.

When Eating

1. Fill the salt shaker with a mixture of herbs and spices.
2. Slowly cut back on the amount of salt added at the table until you don’t use any.
3. Choose fruits and vegetables instead of salty snacks.

Darnell has learned to control his high blood pressure. He takes his blood pressure pills with breakfast every morning, so he won’t forget to take them. He walks daily, has stopped smoking, and has found that food tastes good with less salt and sodium.



Make your personal pledge to do what Darnell has done! Look at these examples:

Breakfast

Cook oatmeal with fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, raisins, cinnamon, and no salt.

Lunch

Use leftover roasted chicken to make a sandwich, instead of using luncheon meats.

Dinner

Make your own soup with vegetables and half the usual amount of salt.

Snack

Eat an orange instead of salty chips.

Your health and your family’s health are priceless. Make an investment!

Write the changes you’ll try to make this week:



Use Herbs and Spices Instead of Salt

Allspice: For meats, fish, poultry, soups, stews, and desserts

Basil: For soups, salads, vegetables, fish, and meats

Cayenne Pepper: For meats, poultry, stews, and sauces

Celery Seed: For fish, salads, dressings, and vegetables

Chili Powder: For meats, poultry, and stews

Cilantro: For meats, sauces, stews, and rice

Cinnamon: For salads, vegetables, breads, and snacks

Clove: For soups, salads, and vegetables

Cumin: For meats and poultry

Curry Powder: For meats, shellfish, and vegetables

Dill Weed and Dill Seed: For fish, soups, salads, and vegetables

Garlic Powder: For meats, poultry, fish, vegetables, salads, soups, and stews

Ginger: For soups, salads, vegetables, and meats

Marjoram: For soups, salads, vegetables, beef, fish, and chicken



Nutmeg: For vegetables and meats

Onion Powder: For meats, poultry, soups, and salads

Oregano: For soups, salads, vegetables, meats, and chicken

Paprika: For meats, fish, poultry, and vegetables

Parsley: For salads, vegetables, fish, and meats

Rosemary: For salads, vegetables, fish, and meats

Sage: For soups, salads, vegetables, meats, and chicken

Thyme: For salads, vegetables, fish, and chicken



Tips for Taking High Blood Pressure Medicine

1. **Take** the medicine exactly as your health care provider tells you to, even if you feel well.
2. **Tell** your health care provider the names of all the medicines you take, including prescription medicine from other providers, nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines you get at the drugstore, home remedies, herbs, supplements, and vitamins. Bring all of them with you when you have an appointment with your provider.
3. **Tell** the provider right away if the medicine makes you feel strange or sick. Ask about changing the dosage or switching to another type.
4. **Refill** your prescription before you run out of medicine.
5. Have your blood pressure **checked** often to see if the medicine is working for you.
6. **Don't stop taking** your medicine if your blood pressure is okay. That means the medicine is working.

Do you know your blood pressure numbers?

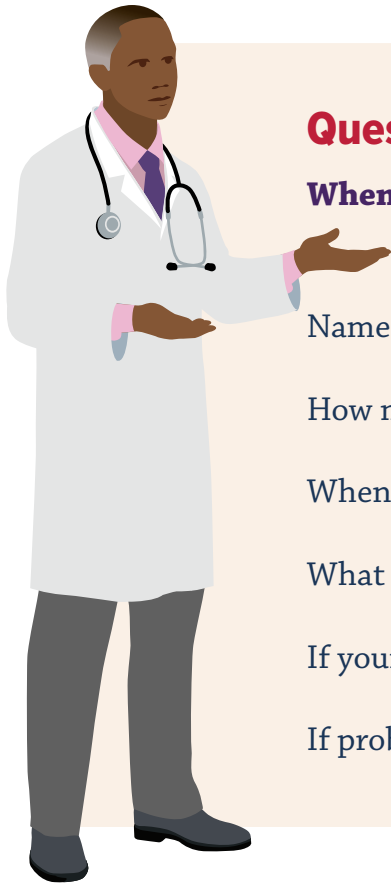
- For most adults, a healthy blood pressure is usually below 120/80 mmHg.
- If your numbers are consistently higher, you may have elevated or high blood pressure and may need to go on medication.
- Talk to your health care provider about what your numbers are and write them down.
- If your health care provider says that you have high blood pressure, ask about how you can lower it or keep it in control.

Write down your blood pressure reading here: _____



Tips for Taking High Blood Pressure Medicine

(continued)



Questions to ask your health care provider

When your provider gives you medicine for high blood pressure, ask:

Name of medicine(s) _____

How much to take _____

When to take it _____

What to eat or drink with it _____

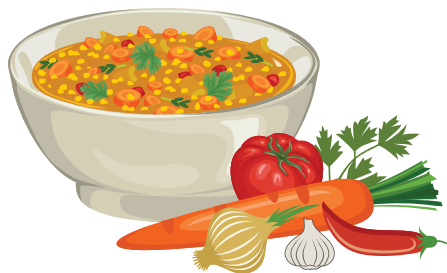
If your other medicines can be taken safely at the same time _____

If problems occur, call this number immediately _____



Soul Food Makeover: Vegetable Stew Recipe

3 cups	water
1 cube	vegetable bouillon, low sodium
2 cups	white potatoes cut in 2-inch strips
2 cups	carrots, sliced
4 cups	summer squash, cut in 1-inch squares
1 cup	summer squash, cut in four chunks
2 ears	fresh corn (1½ cups)
1 teaspoon	thyme, ground
2 cloves	garlic, minced
1 stalk	scallion, chopped
½ small	hot red pepper, chopped
1 cup	onion, coarsely chopped
1 cup	tomatoes, diced



Make It a Meal

To make this dish a meal, serve it with a green salad that includes lettuce (romaine) or spinach, cucumber, and other fresh vegetables. Use a light dressing, such as a vinaigrette, or a low-fat or fat-free dressing. Serve with whole-grain bread or rolls.

You can add your other favorite vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, or string beans.

1. Heat water and bouillon in a large pot, and bring to a boil.
2. Add potatoes and carrots to the broth, and simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Cut the corn off the cob.
4. Add the remaining ingredients, except for the tomatoes, and continue cooking for 15 minutes over medium heat.
5. Remove the four chunks of squash, and puree in a blender.
6. Return pureed mixture to the pot, and let it cook for 10 minutes more.
7. Add tomatoes, and cook for another 5 minutes.
8. Remove from heat, and let it sit for 10 minutes to allow stew to thicken.

Makes 8 servings

Serving size: 1¼ cups	Sodium: 37 mg
Calories: 100	Total Fiber: 5 g
Fat: 1 g	Protein: 3 g
Saturated fat: 0 g	Carbohydrates: 23 g
Cholesterol: 0 mg	Potassium: 607 mg