

## To Lower Hypertension Risk, Stay “Well Read”

Nearly 1 in 3 adults suffers from hypertension, and less than half of those with the condition aren't taking the proper steps to get it under control. In fact, many don't even know they have it.

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, occurs when the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries stays elevated for a prolonged period. The longer blood pressure remains high, the greater the risk of heart damage, as well as heart disease, stroke and kidney failure.

There are no obvious symptoms for hypertension – the only way to detect it is through a **blood pressure reading**. A gauge measures your systolic pressure (artery pressure when the heart beats) and diastolic pressure (the pressure between beats). A systolic/diastolic reading of 120/80 is considered normal blood pressure in a healthy adult.

A blood pressure reading is a common element of just about every doctor's office visit, whether you're there for a checkup, an earache or a bruised knee. Frequent readings allow your doctor to keep a record of your blood pressure, making it easier to spot negative trends.

**MedBen WellLiving** program members have an additional ally in their corner. If you are at risk for hypertension, an RN Health Consultant will contact you to offer customized education and regular counseling.



## Protect Yourself from High Blood Pressure

A few simple healthy habits will help you to keep hypertension under control.

- Choose foods low in salt and high in potassium. Avoid saturated fat and total fat.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Losing even five pounds can lower your blood pressure.
- Stay physically active at least 30 minutes a day.
- If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
- Don't smoke. Tobacco injures blood vessel walls, leading to hardening of the arteries.
- Manage stress and get plenty of rest.
- Practice taking deep, slow breaths to help relax.



SOURCES: Mayo Clinic, CDC, WebMD