



This booklet tells you about high blood pressure

High blood pressure can give you
more chance of having a heart
problem



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About us



We are British Heart Foundation.



We work with doctors and scientists to find treatments for heart problems.



We want to learn how to treat heart problems and stop them from happening.



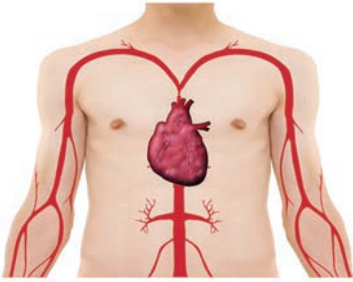
We have lots of information and support to help keep your heart healthy.

This booklet tells you:

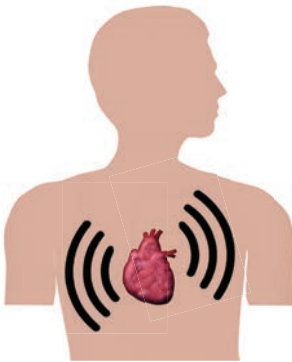
- What high blood pressure is.
- What causes high blood pressure.
- What tests you might have to check if you have high blood pressure.



About high blood pressure



Blood pressure is how hard your heart is working to pump blood around your body.



With high blood pressure, your heart is working extra hard.



Your doctor will say you have high blood pressure if:

- Your blood pressure is higher than it should be

and



- It stays high, even when you are resting.



High blood pressure can give you more chance of having health problems.



It can also give you more chance of having problems with your heart.



Some of these problems can be very serious.



It is very important to try to look after your heart.

How you get high blood pressure



Anyone can get high blood pressure. It can be caused by different things.



The way you live your life can make you have high blood pressure.

Things like:



- Having an unhealthy **diet** and eating too much salt. Your **diet** is the things you eat and drink.



- Smoking or drinking too much alcohol.



- Not moving enough or doing enough exercise.



- Weighing too much.



If you change these things, your blood pressure might go down.



But there are some things you cannot do anything about.

Some groups of people have more chance of having high blood pressure.

This might be:



- People from Black African, African Caribbean or South Asian backgrounds.



- People whose parents or grandparents have heart problems.



- Older people.

How to tell if you have high blood pressure



Most people with high blood pressure do not know they have it.



They find out they have it after a doctor or nurse does a blood pressure check.



You might have some of these things if you have high blood pressure:

- Things looking blurry or fuzzy.



- Pain in your chest.



● Feel dizzy.



● Headaches.



● Nosebleed.



● Feel like you cannot breathe.



If you are worried, speak to your doctor. Or you can call NHS 111.



Call 999 for an ambulance if:

You have a bad pain in your chest that does not go away.



And you feel like you cannot breathe.

Having a blood pressure check



The doctor or nurse will use a special machine to check your blood pressure.



They will put a **sleeve** around your arm. The **sleeve** is a thick piece of material.



The machine will pump up the sleeve. It will start to squeeze your arm.



This might feel a bit funny and tight. But it will not last for very long.



It is important to sit very still. Do not talk when you are having the check.



The machine tells the doctor or nurse what your blood pressure is.



This will help them to work out if you have high blood pressure.

Other things that might happen



It can be hard to tell if you have high blood pressure after 1 check.



This is because your blood pressure can change over the day.



It might be higher if you are very worried. Or if you have just done some exercise.



Your doctor might need to check your blood pressure again.



You might need to check your blood pressure every day for a few days.

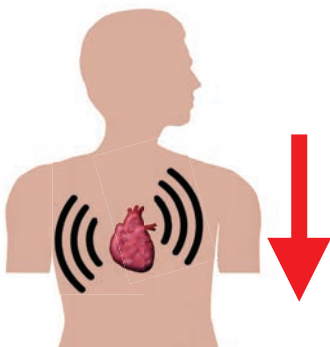


Your doctor will tell you how to do this.

What happens if you have high blood pressure



Your doctor will make a plan with you.



The plan will say what you need to do to lower your blood pressure.



There are 2 ways to lower high blood pressure:

1. Make some changes to help you stay healthy

and



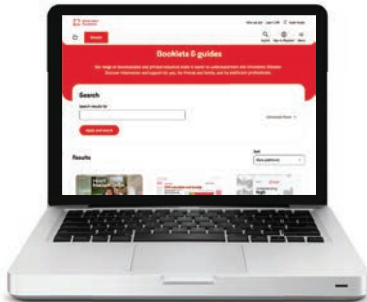
2. Take some medicine.



Your doctor might tell you to try making changes first.



We have an easy read booklet that gives you ideas about changes you could make.



You can find the booklet on our website:

bhf.org.uk/publications

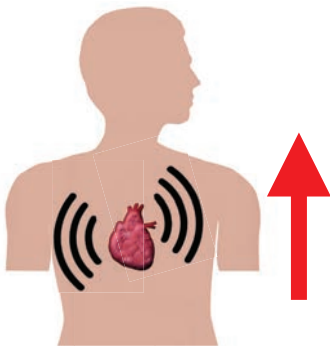


If making changes does not work, the doctor might give you some medicine.

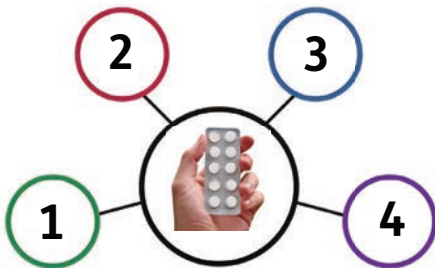
Taking your medicine



It is important to take your medicine every day.



If you stop taking it, your blood pressure might go back up again.



There are lots of different kinds of blood pressure medicine.



You might need to try different medicines before you find 1 that works best for you.

Tips to help you to take your medicine

It can be hard to take medicine every day.



Here are some ideas to help you:

- Try to take your medicine at the same time every day.



- Make sure you have enough medicine if you go on holiday.



- Speak to your pharmacist or doctor before taking any other medicines.



This is because other medicines might affect how blood pressure medicine works.



More information

If you have any worries or questions, you can get support.



You can speak to your local doctor or nurse.



Or you can call our Heart Helpline and speak to 1 of our nurses.



You can contact the helpline.

Phone:
0808 802 1234



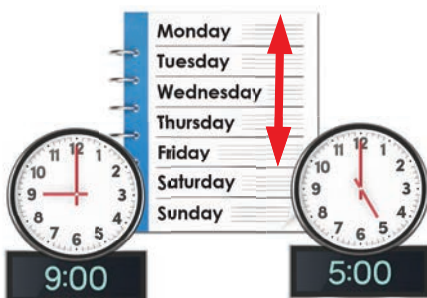
It is free to call this number.



Email:
hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk



Look at our website:
bhf.org.uk/heart-helpline



**The Heart Helpline is open
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.**



This booklet has been supported by Royal Mail in partnership with British Heart Foundation

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