



# Living Well with Hypertension

## 5 easy ways to work out indoors

One of the best gifts you can give your heart is to move more. If you have high blood pressure, regular exercise can help lower it — and keep it in a healthy range. Most adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity a week. Increase amount and intensity gradually over time. Don't let all-or-nothing thinking keep you from doing what you can every day.

What if you can't get outside for a fresh-air workout? Maybe the weather is ugly — or the air quality is bad. Maybe being outdoors just isn't convenient that day.

There are lots of ways to get the exercise you need indoors:

**Get your groove on.** Crank up your favorite music and dance. It's OK to make up your own steps — nobody's looking.

**Fitness tracker.** Wrist worn devices can improve exercise routines and provide data to motivate you. This data can also be given to your doctor.

**Phone exercise apps:** It's no secret that apps can turn your phone into a valuable tool for health and fitness. Such apps work because better health starts with behavioral change. Self-monitoring is at the core of that change.

**Step it up.** If you have access to stairs, climb up and down.

**Go online.** See if your local community center streams free or low-cost fitness classes.

**Design your own workout.** For an at-home circuit workout, mix brief bursts of cardio (like jumping jacks and marching) with strength moves (like sit-ups and squats).

*Sources: American Heart Association*



## 4 ways to take charge

- 1** Learn all you can about it at **[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)**.
- 2** Work with your doctor on a care plan.
- 3** Take your medications as prescribed.
- 4** Aim for healthy habits like exercise, eating right and getting enough sleep.

# Healthy and unhealthy blood pressure ranges

Blood pressure numbers less than 120/80 are within the normal range. If your results fall here, stick with healthy habits like eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. If your blood pressure is above this range, check with your doctor. Your doctor should also evaluate low blood pressure.



| Blood Pressure Category                    | Systolic mm Hg (upper number) |     | Diastolic mm Hg (lower number) |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| Normal                                     | Less than 120                 | and | less than 80                   |
| Elevated                                   | 120-129                       | and | less than 80                   |
|                                            |                               |     |                                |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1 | 130-139                       | or  | 80-89                          |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2 | 140 or higher                 | or  | 90 or higher                   |

Source: American Heart Association

If you smoke or vape, ask your doctor for help quitting. Or call the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**. It may take a few tries, but it’s one of the best things you can do for your lungs and heart.

## Contact us

Mercy Care  
4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150  
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Member Services:

**602-263-3000** or  
**1-800-624-3879** (TTY **711**),  
Monday through Friday,  
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ACC-RBHA members with SMI:

**602-586-1841** or  
**1-800-564-5465** (TTY **711**),  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour nurse line:

**602-263-3000** or  
**1-800-624-3879**

Additional contacts:

**<https://www.mercycareaz.org/contact-us.html>**

Contract services are funded under contract with the State of Arizona. This newsletter contains general health information that should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services.

Mercy Care is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

**[mercycareaz.org](https://www.mercycareaz.org)**

## Need to limit sodium? Here's how:

Is your blood pressure creeping up? To lower it and protect your heart, your doctor may suggest cutting back on sodium. That's a mineral found in salt.

Most of the sodium in our diets comes from packaged and restaurant foods. These simple steps can help you scale back:

**Shop smart.** Take a few moments to compare food labels. Then choose the product with the least amount of sodium per serving.

**Be choosy with condiments.** Sauces, dips and dressings are often packed with sodium. Look for reduced-sodium versions — or use herbs and spices for flavor instead.

**Rinse away sodium.** Run water over canned veggies and beans before cooking.

**Go for fresh.** Pick fresh poultry, fish or lean meat instead of cured or smoked foods.

**Speak up when dining out.** Ask if your food can be made without extra salt.

**Watch for red flags on menus.** Foods described as pickled, brined or barbecued tend to be high in sodium.

### A final tip

Food isn't the only source of sodium. Some over-the-counter medications are high in sodium too. Check their labels and leave anything with sodium or salt on the shelf.

*Source: American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org))*



## Care Management

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. This is a covered service for members with certain health needs. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.