

## Look what you can do for your heart at [www.sistertosister.org](http://www.sistertosister.org)

- Learn the facts about heart disease
- Locate a nearby screening center
- Assess your personal level of risk
- Build a customized action plan
- Track your heart health progress
- Ask experts for advice
- Give and get community support
- Discover daily heart health tips...and more!



**Sister to Sister: The Women's Heart Health Foundation,** a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is dedicated to preventing heart disease in women by:

- Offering women free cardiac screenings to promote early detection and treatment of heart disease and its risk factors.
- Increasing awareness that heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States.
- Helping women make healthy lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of heart disease.

### **SISTER TO SISTER**

4701 Willard Avenue, Suite 223  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Tel: 1.888.718.8033  
Email: [info@sistertosister.org](mailto:info@sistertosister.org)  
[www.sistertosister.org](http://www.sistertosister.org)

## Managing Your Blood Pressure



# YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HAVE A HEALTHY HEART



**SISTER TO SISTER**  
The Women's Heart Health Foundation

## The Blood Pressure/Heart Health Connection

Three out of four U.S. women have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. This common heart disease risk factor raises a woman's chances for having a stroke or heart attack, yet fewer than one in three women are controlling their blood pressure. We owe it to our hearts to get a handle on our blood pressure, starting with a blood pressure check.

*You know the drill: Roll up your sleeve, attach the cuff, relax, and feel the squeeze.*

Blood pressure is recorded as two numbers: one "over" the other, as in 120/80 mmHG (millimeters of mercury). The top number is the systolic pressure of the blood when your heart beats. The bottom number (80) is the diastolic pressure. Aim to have a higher systolic pressure than diastolic. Here's how to decode your numbers:

**Normal blood pressure: Systolic <120; Diastolic <80**

**What to do:** Maintain healthy eating and physical activity habits.

**Pre-hypertension: Systolic 120-139; Diastolic 80-89**

**What to do:** You're at risk for developing high blood pressure, so check yours regularly. Make changes to your eating and physical activity habits to reduce your risk. See a doctor if you have diabetes.

**Hypertension: Systolic 140+; Diastolic 90+**

**What to do:** You have high blood pressure. See your doctor right away. Talk to your doctor about medications that might help, as well as changes you should make in your diet, physical activity, and general lifestyle).

## Just Between Us...



Before Your Blood Pressure Is Taken

- Don't drink coffee or smoke cigarettes for at least 30 minutes.
- Sit for 5 minutes with your back supported and feet flat on the floor. Rest your arm on the table at heart level.
- Go to the bathroom. A full bladder can change your reading.
- Get two blood pressure readings, taken at least two minutes apart, and average the results.

## YES YOU CAN MANAGE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

### 10 Heart Healthy Changes

1. Losing just 10 pounds can help reduce your blood pressure significantly.
2. If you've been sedentary, increasing your daily physical activity can lower your blood pressure within just a few weeks.
3. Avoid smoking. Smoking throughout the day means your blood pressure may remain constantly high.
4. Limit alcohol intake. More than one drink a day can raise a woman's blood pressure by several points. It can also reduce the effectiveness of high blood pressure medications.
5. Try to avoid stressful situations, which can cause a temporary spike in blood pressure. Managing your stress levels can also make a long-term difference in lowering your blood pressure if you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure.
6. Limit your sodium intake. The bigger your cutback, the bigger your reduction in blood pressure. Start by taking the salt shaker off the table.
7. When eating out, ask for your dish to be prepared without salt. Then you can then better control the amount you consume.
8. If you take blood pressure medication, take it exactly as your doctor has prescribed it. Make sure you understand the amount of medicine you need to take each day and the specific times of day you should take it.
9. Eat a heart healthy diet, which includes plenty of vegetables and fruits as well as whole grains, low-fat and fat-free milk, fish, lean meat, poultry, dry beans.
10. If you are pregnant, or are taking oral contraceptives or hormone replacement therapy, you may experience a rise in your blood pressure so have it checked regularly. Pregnant women who have high blood pressure may be particularly at risk for certain problems.

GET MORE TIPS AT [SISTERTOSISTER.ORG](http://SISTERTOSISTER.ORG)