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Blood Pressure Medicines

Also called: Antihypertensive medicines, High blood pressure medicines

What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure [<https://medlineplus.gov/highbloodpressure.html>] , also called hypertension, is when blood puts too much pressure against the walls of your arteries. Almost half of American adults have high blood pressure, usually with no symptoms. But it can cause serious problems such as stroke [<https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html>] , heart failure [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartfailure.html>] , heart attack [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartattack.html>] , and kidney disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/kidneydiseases.html>] .

What lifestyle changes can help lower high blood pressure?

Healthy lifestyle changes [<https://medlineplus.gov/howtopreventhighbloodpressure.html>] can help reduce high blood pressure:

- Losing weight [<https://medlineplus.gov/weightcontrol.html>]
- Being physically active [<https://medlineplus.gov/howmuchexercisedoineed.html>]
- Managing stress [<https://medlineplus.gov/stress.html>]
- Reducing sodium [<https://medlineplus.gov/sodium.html>] in your diet
- Avoiding alcohol [<https://medlineplus.gov/alcohol.html>] , tobacco [<https://medlineplus.gov/quittingsmoking.html>] , and illegal drugs [<https://medlineplus.gov/druguseandaddiction.html>]
- Getting enough sleep [<https://medlineplus.gov/healthysleep.html>]

What if lifestyle changes alone cannot lower blood pressure?

Sometimes lifestyle changes alone cannot control or lower your high blood pressure. In that case, your health care provider may prescribe blood pressure medicines.

How do blood pressure medicines work?

The most commonly used blood pressure medicines work in different ways to lower blood pressure:

- **Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs)** keep your blood vessels from narrowing as much and allows blood to move through them with less pressure.
- **Beta blockers** help your heart beat slower and with less force. This means that your heart pumps less blood through your blood vessels. Beta blockers are typically used only as a backup option or if you also have certain other conditions.
- **Calcium channel blockers** prevent calcium from entering the muscle cells of your heart and blood vessels. This allows the blood vessels to relax.
- **Diuretics** remove extra water and sodium (salt) from your body. This lowers the amount of fluid in your blood. Diuretics are often used with other high blood pressure medicines, sometimes in one combined pill.

Often, two or more medicines work better than one. If these medicines do not lower your blood pressure enough, your provider may suggest that you take another type of blood pressure medicine.

While taking the medicines, it is still important to keep up with your healthy lifestyle changes. Doing both helps keep blood pressure lower than lifestyle changes or medicines alone.

NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Start Here

- High Blood Pressure [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/womens-health-topics/high-blood-pressure>] (Food and Drug Administration)
- What Is High Blood Pressure Medicine? [<https://www.heart.org/-/media/files/health-topics/answers-by-heart/what-is-hbp-medicine.pdf>] (American Heart Association) - PDF

Related Issues

- Beta Blockers: Do They Cause Weight Gain? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/beta-blockers/FAQ-20058385?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/beta-blockers/faq-20058385?p=1>]
- Blood Pressure Medication: Still Necessary if I Lose Weight? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure-medication/FAQ-20058056?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure-medication/faq-20058056?p=1>]
- Blood Pressure Medications: Can They Raise My Triglycerides? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure-medications/FAQ-20057975?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure-medications/faq-20057975?p=1>]
- Calcium Supplements: Do They Interfere with Blood Pressure Drugs? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/calcium-supplements/FAQ-20058266?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/calcium-supplements/faq-20058266?p=1>]
- Choosing Blood Pressure Medications [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure-medication/ART-20046280?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure-medication/art-20046280?p=1>]
- Diuretics and Gout: What's the Connection? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gout/expert-answers/diuretics-and-gout/FAQ-20058146?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/gout/expert-answers/diuretics-and-gout/faq-20058146?p=1>]
- Diuretics: A Cause of Low Potassium? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure/FAQ-20058432?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/expert-answers/blood-pressure/faq-20058432?p=1>]
- Herbal Supplements and Heart Medicines May Not Mix [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/herbal-supplements/art-20046488?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/herbal-supplements/art-20046488?p=1>]
- How Do Beta Blocker Drugs Affect Exercise? [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/medication-information/how-do-beta-blocker-drugs-affect-exercise>] (American Heart Association)
- Managing High Blood Pressure Medications [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/managing-high-blood-pressure-medications>] (American Heart Association)

Specifics

- Alpha Blockers [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/alpha-blockers/ART-20044214?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/alpha-blockers/art-20044214?p=1>]

- Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/angiotensin-II-receptor-blockers/ART-20045009?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/ace-inhibitors/ART-20047480?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/ace-inhibitors/art-20047480?p=1>]
- Beta Blockers [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/beta-blockers/ART-20044522?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Calcium Channel Blockers [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/calcium-channel-blockers/ART-20047605?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/calcium-channel-blockers/art-20047605?p=1>]
- Central-Acting Agents [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure-medication/ART-20044451?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure-medication/art-20044451?p=1>]
- Diuretics [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/diuretics/ART-20048129?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Types of Blood Pressure Medications [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/types-of-blood-pressure-medications>] (American Heart Association)
- Vasodilators [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure-medication/ART-20048154?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/high-blood-pressure-medication/art-20048154?p=1>]

Genetics

- Hypertension: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/hypertension>]
 (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Antihypertensive Agents [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?intr=%22Antihypertensive+Agents%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Guide de pratique clinique en soins de première ligne d'Hypertension Canada... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40730439>]
- Article: Intensive Blood Pressure Control in Patients With Diabetes and Previous Stroke:... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40685691>]
- Article: Innovative nitric oxide delivery technology for postoperative pulmonary hypertension in congenital... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40681972>]
- Blood Pressure Medicines -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Antihypertensive+Agents%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American Heart Association [<https://www.heart.org/en/>]
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]


Patient Handouts

- ACE inhibitors [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000087.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000087.htm>]
- High blood pressure medications [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007484.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007484.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

ACE inhibitors [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000087.htm>]

Beta-blockers overdose [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002578.htm>]

Calcium-channel blocker overdose [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002580.htm>]

High blood pressure medications [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007484.htm>]

Thiazide overdose [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002577.htm>]

Related Health Topics

High Blood Pressure [<https://medlineplus.gov/highbloodpressure.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Blood Pressure Medicines* is the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]

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