



# Healthy Blood Pressure Healthy Heart Beat



Initiated by the World Hypertension League

**WORLD**  
**HYPERTENSION**  
**DAY** MAY 17, 2013



## What is Hypertension?

Hypertension is most commonly known as High Blood Pressure. It is a chronic medical condition in which the blood pressure is elevated. Many people have high blood pressure for years without knowing it. Most of the time, there are

no symptoms, but when high blood pressure goes untreated, it damages arteries and vital organs throughout the body. That's why high blood pressure is often called the **"silent killer"**.



## Hypertension Is A Global Epidemic!

Globally, **9.4 million die every year and 1.5 billion people worldwide suffer** because of high blood pressure or hypertension. It is the biggest single risk factor for death world wide causing heart disease, stroke and kidney disease and diabetes.

## What Is World Hypertension Day?

World Hypertension Day has been established to highlight the preventable stroke, heart and kidney diseases caused by high blood pressure and to communicate to the public information on prevention, detection and treatment. Each year, **May 17th** is designated **World Hypertension Day**.



## DID YOU KNOW?

A painless test that shows a graph of the electrical activity of the heart, called an electrocardiogram (ECG), can confirm whether or not you have atrial fibrillation.

*Health link BC*



## What is Healthy Blood Pressure?

### KNOW YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

As hypertension and AF are often related, it is good to measure your blood pressure regularly at home with an automatic, cuff style bicep (upper arm) monitor. Look for a blood pressure reading should be below 135 mmHg for the upper reading and below 85 mmHg for the lower reading for good health. When taking your blood pressure remember to do it when you are calm and quiet and at least 30 minutes after exercise. Begin by making sure the cuff fits around your upper arm. Sit with your back straight and don't cross your feet. Take multiple readings at the same time of day. And of course, record your results for future reference. If you maintain a healthy blood pressure, you will help to maintain a healthy heart rhythm.

## What is Healthy Heart Beat?

### KNOW YOUR RHYTHM

Do you know whether your heart beat or heart rhythm is normal? You can take your pulse at the same time as when you take your blood pressure. A faster than normal heartbeat is usually greater than 100 beats per minute and sometimes as fast as 150 beats per minute. An irregular heartbeat or rhythm is harder to detect. Symptoms range from feeling an irregular beat in your chest, to tiredness, fainting or absolutely nothing. So, it is best to check with your doctor who can do a simple test for AF.



## HOW COMMON IS AF?

Atrial fibrillation increases with age and by the age of 75 years, about 1 in 10 will have atrial fibrillation.

## What is Atrial Fibrillation (AF)?

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common problem when the heart is pumping very irregularly and usually fast. Atrial fibrillation may have no symptoms and only be noticed by feeling the pulse or by a health care professional testing the heart. When the heart is not pumping well, and regularly, blood clots can form in the heart, break free and travel to the brain causing a stroke. AF episodes are usually intermittent, often recurring, and may become permanent.

## What's the Link Between Hypertension and Atrial Fibrillation (AF)?

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is the most common cause or risk factor that may lead to atrial fibrillation (abnormal heart beat). The combination of having atrial fibrillation and hypertension both significantly increases the risk of stroke!

## DID YOU KNOW?

"Individuals with atrial fibrillation have a risk of stroke that is 3 to 5 times greater than those without AF."

HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION

## DID YOU KNOW?

Very little salt is found naturally in food, it is nearly all added in preparation. Adding salt to food is estimated to kill more than 3 million people a year worldwide.



## The Best Prescription Is Prevention

### STAY ACTIVE – ALL WAYS!

It may be possible to prevent hypertension and atrial fibrillation by staying physically active. Try light to moderate physical activities such as gardening, walking and housework as these have been shown in studies to be effective.

### EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Eating healthy is always good for you. Begin by eating more fruits and vegetables. Have at least one vegetarian meal a week. Take fruit and nuts in their natural form as a snack. Or eat one fruit or vegetable of every colour, every day.

### DECREASE FAST PROCESSED FOODS

Cut down on foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt. These are mainly found in fast foods, ready to eat packaged foods and restaurant foods. If you cook more meals at home you can control how much fat, sugar and salt you use. And remember, it's easy to remove the salt shaker from the table.

### LIMIT ALCOHOL

Drink little or no alcohol.

### STOP SMOKING

Smoking is major cause of death and disability. If you smoke, plan to stop.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Studies show that long-term use of the blood thinner warfarin in patients with AF can reduce the risk of stroke by 70 to 80%.



## AF Treatment

### CONTROLLING YOUR HEART

There are two general strategies for the treatment of atrial fibrillation - rhythm control and rate control. Your doctor will decide which strategy is best for you based on your symptoms and other factors.

### RHYTHM CONTROL

These treatments attempt to prevent an irregular heartbeat by restoring and maintaining a normal, regular heartbeat. The first approach to rhythm control usually involves taking medications. Occasionally, some patients will require a controlled electric shock to the heart to restore a normal rhythm. Treatments for AF are generally guided by specialists, who can monitor the response and decide if any changes should be made to the treatment strategy.

### RATE CONTROL

Almost every patient with atrial fibrillation will be prescribed a medication that is designed to slow the heart rate during atrial fibrillation. For many, this type of medication is enough to control the symptoms.

## Hypertension Treatment, Blood Pressure Medications

Many drugs that lower blood pressure also prevent heart attacks and strokes.  
Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider for individualized care. And then remember to:

- Take your medications regularly as instructed by your physician.
- Most people need more than one medication to control blood pressure.
- Report any side effects to your physician.
- Continue to monitor blood pressure while on medication.

## Partnerships

**World Hypertension Day (WHD)** is an official partner with **International Society of Hypertension (ISH)**, **World Kidney Day (WKD)**, **World Action on Salt and Health (WASH)** and **International Diabetes Federation (IDF)**.

All these organizations (WHD, WKD, WASH, IDF) work together to raise global awareness of high blood pressure as a common cause and complication of all vascular diseases including kidney diseases, obesity and diabetes.



International  
Diabetes  
Federation

### For more information

[www.worldhypertensionleague.org](http://www.worldhypertensionleague.org)  
[www.hypertension.ca](http://www.hypertension.ca)  
[www.hypertension.qc.ca](http://www.hypertension.qc.ca)  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)  
[www.worldkidneyday.org](http://www.worldkidneyday.org)

[www.worldactiononsalt.com](http://www.worldactiononsalt.com)  
[www.idf.org](http://www.idf.org)  
[www.ish-world.com](http://www.ish-world.com)  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)  
[www.sodium101.ca](http://www.sodium101.ca)

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