



# Live Healthy Georgia- Seniors Taking Charge



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## Spring into Control with Blood Pressure

### **How does my blood pressure go up and why is this bad?**

Blood delivers oxygen and nutrients through our blood vessels to important parts of the body. When our blood vessels become clogged from a plaque buildup of cholesterol and fat, our hearts must work twice as hard to pump our blood. This is why blood pressure increases.

An increase in blood pressure is bad because of the effect it has on our hearts. A heart is a muscle, and every time it has to do extra work with high blood pressure, it grows. Eventually, an enlarged heart can become weaker.

When you add obesity, smoking, or diabetes to the mix, the risk of heart attack, stroke or kidney disease for those with high blood pressure increases dramatically. This is why it is important to know what your blood pressure is!

### **What does *YOUR* blood pressure mean?**

**Low:** determined by symptoms rather than a blood pressure reading

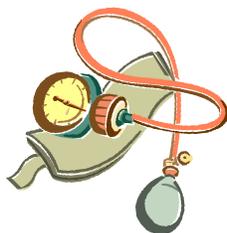
**Normal:** 120/80 mmHg or *lower*

**Moderately high (pre hypertension):** 120–139/80–89 mm Hg

**High (hypertension):** 140/90 mm Hg or higher

### **How can I help lower my blood pressure?**

- Do not smoke
- If you drink alcohol, women should only have 1 drink\*/day and men should only have 2 drinks\*/day
  - Eat less salt (buy reduced sodium foods)
  - If you are overweight, lose weight
- Exercise regularly (see exercise ideas and tips)



**\*1 drink =**  
5 oz. wine OR  
1 oz. liquor OR  
12 oz. beer



### Exercise –getting started:

- Goal: 30 minutes every day
- Start small and build up to 30 minutes/day
- You do not have to get 30 minutes all at one time
  - Try two 15 minute walks (one in the morning and one in the evening each day)
- Do something you enjoy doing! ☺

### Ideas to get a little extra exercise:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator
- In parking lots, park farther away from the store
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest

### 5 tips to stick with your exercise plan:

1. Make a workout plan/schedule and stick with it
2. Have a friend or family member exercise with you
3. Alternate activities (add variety)
4. Set goals
5. Reward yourself for doing a good job! ☺

[http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/mission/partner/physical\\_activity.pdf](http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/mission/partner/physical_activity.pdf)



### Exercise Ideas:

- Chair exercises
- Walking
- Swimming
- Water aerobics class
- Stationary bicycle
- Yoga or Tai Chi
- Dance class
- Fishing (standing)
- Gardening
- Golf (walking course)
- Canoeing/rowing
- Cleaning the house/  
home repair

## Lower Sodium, Heart Healthy Salsa

\*Store bought salsa *can* have *too* much sodium\*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- 2 red bell peppers, seeded and diced
- 2 green bell peppers, seeded and diced
- 4 tomatoes, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1 tsp salt



**Preparation:** Wash vegetables. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Toss gently to mix. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavors to blend.