

# Diabetes and Blood Pressure



ALASKA NATIVE  
TRIBAL HEALTH  
CONSORTIUM

# Diabetes and Blood Pressure

Most diabetes complications are affected by uncontrolled blood pressure. You can reduce your risk of having a heart attack, stroke, eye disease and kidney disease by keeping your blood pressure at goal.

## What should my blood pressure be?



The goal for blood pressure for many people with diabetes is 140/90 mm/Hg. If you have certain health conditions you may have a different blood pressure goal. Ask your provider your blood pressure goal.

My blood pressure goal:

\_\_\_\_\_

My last 3 blood pressures:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## What can I do to lower my blood pressure?

There are several things you can do to lower your blood pressure. The lifestyle changes that lower blood pressure also lower your risk for the major complications of diabetes.

### The four ways you can lower your blood pressure are:

#### 1. Lose weight



Extra weight affects your blood pressure, blood sugar, blood cholesterol and triglycerides. The best way to lose weight involves daily physical activity and making healthy food choices, such as avoiding sugary drinks and watching portions. Talk to your regional dietitian about making a food plan to help you lose weight.

#### 2. Make healthy food choices that include less processed foods (store foods in packaging) and high sodium condiments



Sodium is a mineral that raises blood pressure. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods. Potassium is a mineral that helps lower blood pressure. Potassium is found in plant foods. When a person eats less processed food and more plants such as greens, berries, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, their diet will be higher in blood pressure, lowering potassium and have less blood pressure-raising sodium. Taking a potassium supplement is not necessarily recommended, it's better to get it from food.



Sodium can also be found in high amounts in condiments. Commonly eaten high sodium condiments are: soy sauce, Johnny's Seasoning Salt, garlic salt and table salt. Read the sodium content on the label of the store foods and condiments you eat. You should have no more than 1,500mg-2,400 mg a day, depending on your health conditions.

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#### 3. Stay away from tobacco



Tobacco narrows and restricts your blood vessels. Having diabetes also does this. Using tobacco in addition to having diabetes causes serious damage to your vessels. Tobacco is addicting. Many people need support to help them stop using tobacco. Talk to your provider about tobacco cessation resources available in your region.

#### 4. Become physically active



Exercise reduces blood sugar, blood cholesterol, blood pressure and triglycerides. It also helps with losing weight and staying mentally healthy. Set a goal for physical activity and make a plan. Think about: What kind of physical activity can you do? What time of day will you do it? How long will you be active? What days will you do it?

My physical activity goal is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## How do I know when my blood pressure is at goal?

Your blood pressure should be taken at every clinic visit. Your blood pressure readings should be at your personal goal. Some people may also need to monitor their blood pressure at home using a home blood pressure monitor.

## More Information

For more information or if you have questions, contact:

**Diabetes Educator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Diabetes Program**

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**[www.anthc.org/diabetes](http://www.anthc.org/diabetes)**  
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