



# Blood Pressure Guide

For EUTF HMSA Members  
2023-2024



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## HIGHLIGHTS

A guide to understanding blood pressure .....	2
Blood pressure benefit worksheet .....	5
How to lower your blood pressure.....	6
DASH to good health .....	7
What's BMI got to do with it? .....	9
Get the most from medications .....	11
Blood pressure action plan .....	12
Additional resources .....	14



# A guide to understanding blood pressure

We want our members to live full and healthy lives in their working years and through retirement. An important way to gain better well-being is to use the health plan benefits you're already paying for and to choose a healthy lifestyle.

We hope this guide motivates you to use your benefits to achieve your best health!

## Did you know?

High blood pressure doesn't just happen to older adults. About one in four men and nearly one in five women ages 35 to 44 has high blood pressure.



## Knowledge is power

Take the quiz to test your knowledge.

### True or False?

1. If you feel fine, you don't have to worry about high blood pressure.
2. If high blood pressure runs in your family, there's nothing you can do to prevent it.
3. If you don't add salt to your food at the table, you're in control of your sodium intake and blood pressure.
4. Your primary care provider checks your blood pressure when you visit them, so you don't need to check it at home.
5. If you've maintained lower readings despite a high blood pressure diagnosis, you can stop taking your medication.
6. Your EUTF HMSA medical benefit includes a no-cost annual preventive exam with an in-network primary care provider.

### Yes or No?

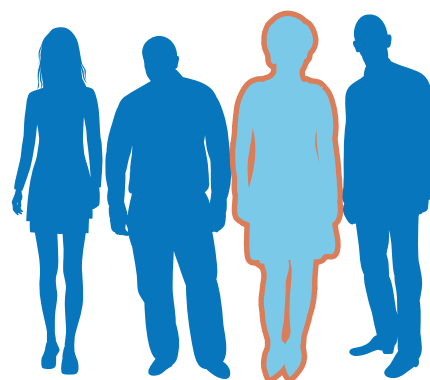
Do you know your blood pressure measurement? Have you scheduled your preventive health exam with your primary care provider this year?

Statements 1-5 are false, while statement 6 is true! To learn more about the importance of blood pressure control and how your medical plan benefits can help you stay healthy, continue reading!

About 50% of adults  
over the age of 20 have elevated  
or high blood pressure.



Only one in four adults  
with high blood pressure have their  
condition under control.



## What is high blood pressure?

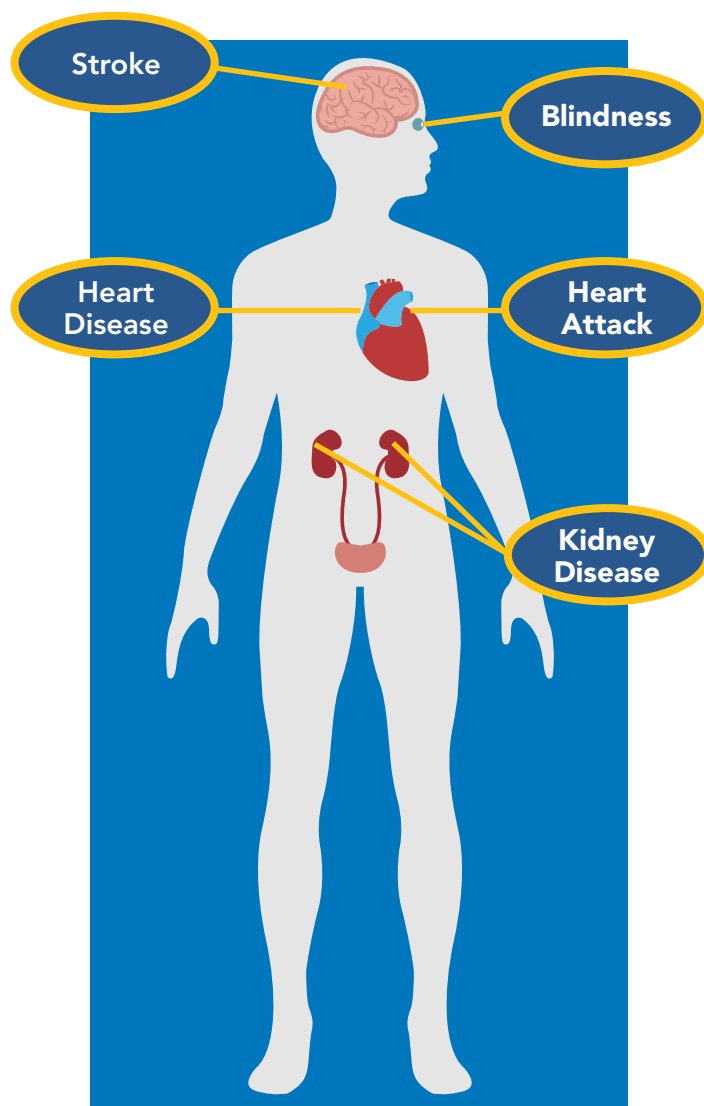
High blood pressure, also referred to as hypertension, is when the force of blood flowing through your blood vessels is consistently too high.

## Reasons to know your blood pressure

One in three Hawaii adults have high blood pressure and many don't know they have it. Most of the time, there are no obvious symptoms. Certain physical traits and lifestyle choices can put you at a greater risk for high blood pressure.

Left untreated, the damage that high blood pressure does to your circulatory system can lead to heart attack, stroke, and other health conditions.

## Some health risks of high blood pressure



## There's good news!

The good news is there are many actions you can take to keep your blood pressure within a healthy range.

While there generally isn't a single cause of high blood pressure, reducing risk factors such as smoking, poor diet, being inactive, overweight, or obese, or having high levels of stress can have a positive impact.

The best way to protect yourself is to work with your primary care provider and make healthy changes to your lifestyle.

## Do you know your blood pressure?

Use this chart to understand your numbers. A blood pressure reading of more than 120/80 means that there's too much pressure on the walls of your blood vessels.

Blood pressure category	Systolic mm Hg (upper number)	Diastolic mm Hg (lower number)
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80
Elevated	120-129	Less than 80
High blood pressure (hypertension) stage 1	130-139	80-89
High blood pressure stage 2	140 or higher	90 or higher
Hypertensive crisis	Higher than 180	Higher than 120

## Talk with your doctor

- As an EUTF HMSA member, you're highly encouraged to visit your primary care provider at least once a year for a preventive checkup.
- This annual visit is a benefit available to you at no cost (no copayment) when seeing an in-network provider.
- If you have a primary care provider, make an appointment for an annual checkup to assess your overall health.
- If you don't have a primary care provider, go to [hmsa.com/eutf](https://hmsa.com/eutf) and click Find a Doctor. Or call (808) 948-6499 or 1 (800) 776-4672.





# Blood Pressure Benefit Worksheet



Did you know about these health plan benefits?

These plan benefits are available to you at no additional cost:



## **Annual preventive checkup.**

This annual checkup with your primary care provider will help assess your overall health. When you see a provider in the HMSA network, the checkup is available at no cost. If you don't have a primary care provider, go to [hmsa.com/eutf](https://hmsa.com/eutf) and click Find a Doctor Or call (808) 948-6499 or 1 (800) 776-4672.



## **A dedicated health care team.**

A team of health care professionals, registered dietitians, and health coaches can supplement the care you receive from your primary care provider. To learn more, call 1 (855) 329-5461, option 1, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



## **Personalized care.**

If you've been recently diagnosed with hypertension and have other chronic conditions, an HMSA representative from our health and well-being support team can help you better understand the benefits, programs, and health coaching that are available to EUTF members. Connect with an HMSA health coach to set nutrition, exercise, and stress and weight management goals customized just for you. Visit [hmsa.com/well-being/health-coaching/](https://hmsa.com/well-being/health-coaching/) or call 1 (855) 329-5461, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



## **Referrals to behavioral health care providers.**

Carelon Behavioral Health<sup>SM</sup> and HMSA can help you alleviate the stress of managing your health conditions. To learn more about getting a referral to behavioral health care providers, resources, and services, call Carelon Behavioral Health at (808) 695-7700 or 1 (855) 856-0578.



## **Fun and interactive health education workshops.**

As an HMSA member, you're welcome to participate in any of our virtual fitness, nutrition, stress management, or other health and well-being workshops at no added cost. To find a workshop, go to [hmsa.com/healtheducation](https://hmsa.com/healtheducation). To register, call 1 (855) 329-5461, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



I plan to use one or more of these services by \_\_\_\_\_.  
date

Carelon Behavioral Health<sup>SM</sup> is an independent company providing behavioral health utilization management and quality improvement services on behalf of HMSA.

# How to lower your blood pressure



Work with your primary care provider to determine the best treatment for you. Together, you can set goals to improve your blood pressure.

A healthy lifestyle is important to managing your blood pressure. A healthy lifestyle, which affects your physical and mental well-being, includes:

- Staying physically active.
- Eating a healthy diet.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Being tobacco-free.
- Limiting alcohol.
- Managing stress.
- Having regular medical checkups with blood pressure checks.

## Shake it up and move regularly!



Exercise helps prevent and lessen the effects of health conditions such as:

- High cholesterol.
- Excess weight.
- Stress.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes.
- Arthritis.



Mindful movement such as yoga and tai chi can:

- Improve mood.
- Reduce stress and anxiety.
- Manage depression.



Before you begin an exercise program, check with your primary care provider to determine what type of exercise and how much of it is safe for you.

- Choose activities that are fun.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes.
- Exercise with a friend for support.



Engage in moderate intensity exercise for 30 minutes or more at least five days a week.

- A moderately intense workout increases your heart rate and causes you to breathe harder, but you still should be able to talk comfortably.
- Try an exercise such as walking, cycling on flat terrain, water aerobics, or gardening.

For more information on physical activity guidelines for adults, check out [cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm](https://cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm).

## DASH to good health

Want to stop hypertension the healthy way? There's a diet for that! The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension Diet was created by the National Institutes of Health. It's a heart-healthy diet that doesn't require any fancy recipes or special foods.



To follow DASH, the American Heart Association recommends you focus on eating:

- A variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole grains.
- Low-fat dairy products.
- Skinless poultry and fish.
- Nuts and legumes.
- Non-tropical vegetable oils.
- Foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium, and fewer sugar-sweetened beverages.
- The leanest possible cuts of red meat.

## Eat the rainbow

A colorful plate is a healthy plate. Luckily, there's a rainbow of fruits and vegetables so you can get your five servings daily, three of vegetables and two of fruits. Fresh produce is best, but if you can't go to the farmers market, frozen is a good second choice. Canned in water or in their own juices is a good third choice.

### DASH Chicken Quinoa Bowl with Olives & Cucumber

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed | ½ teaspoon ground cumin                    |
| ¼ teaspoon salt                                     | ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper (optional)   |
| ¼ teaspoon ground pepper                            | 2 cups cooked quinoa                       |
| 1 7-ounce jar roasted red peppers, rinsed           | ¼ cup pitted Kalamata olives, chopped      |
| ¼ cup slivered almonds                              | ¼ cup finely chopped red onion             |
| 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided       | 1 cup diced cucumber                       |
| 1 small clove garlic, crushed                       | ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese                 |
| 1 teaspoon paprika                                  | 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley |



Position a rack in upper third of oven; preheat broiler to high. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper and place on the prepared baking sheet. Broil, turning once, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part reads 165 degrees F, 14 to 18 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a clean cutting board and slice or shred. Meanwhile, place pep-

pers, almonds, 2 tablespoons oil, garlic, paprika, cumin and crushed red pepper (if using) in a mini food processor. Puree until fairly smooth. Combine quinoa, olives, red onion and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a medium bowl. To serve, divide the quinoa mixture among four bowls and top with equal amounts of cucumber, chicken, and the red pepper sauce. Sprinkle with feta and parsley.



## Keep a healthy weight

Obesity rates have been rising worldwide for the past decade. Excess weight is a common precursor to many health conditions, including high blood pressure and heart disease. In fact, when you gain weight, your blood pressure rises. Losing just 10 pounds can help bring it down.

### Steps to weight loss



1. Calculate your BMI (page 10) and waist circumference.



2. Check with your primary care provider to see whether you need to lose weight.



3. If so, set a goal to lose 10% of your current weight.



4. Create a heart-healthy meal plan and stick to it.



5. Elevate your heart rate with 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least five times per week.



6. Break exercise into chunks. Try 10-15 minutes of brisk walking or stair climbing two to three times a day.



7. Check in once a week to see how you're doing.

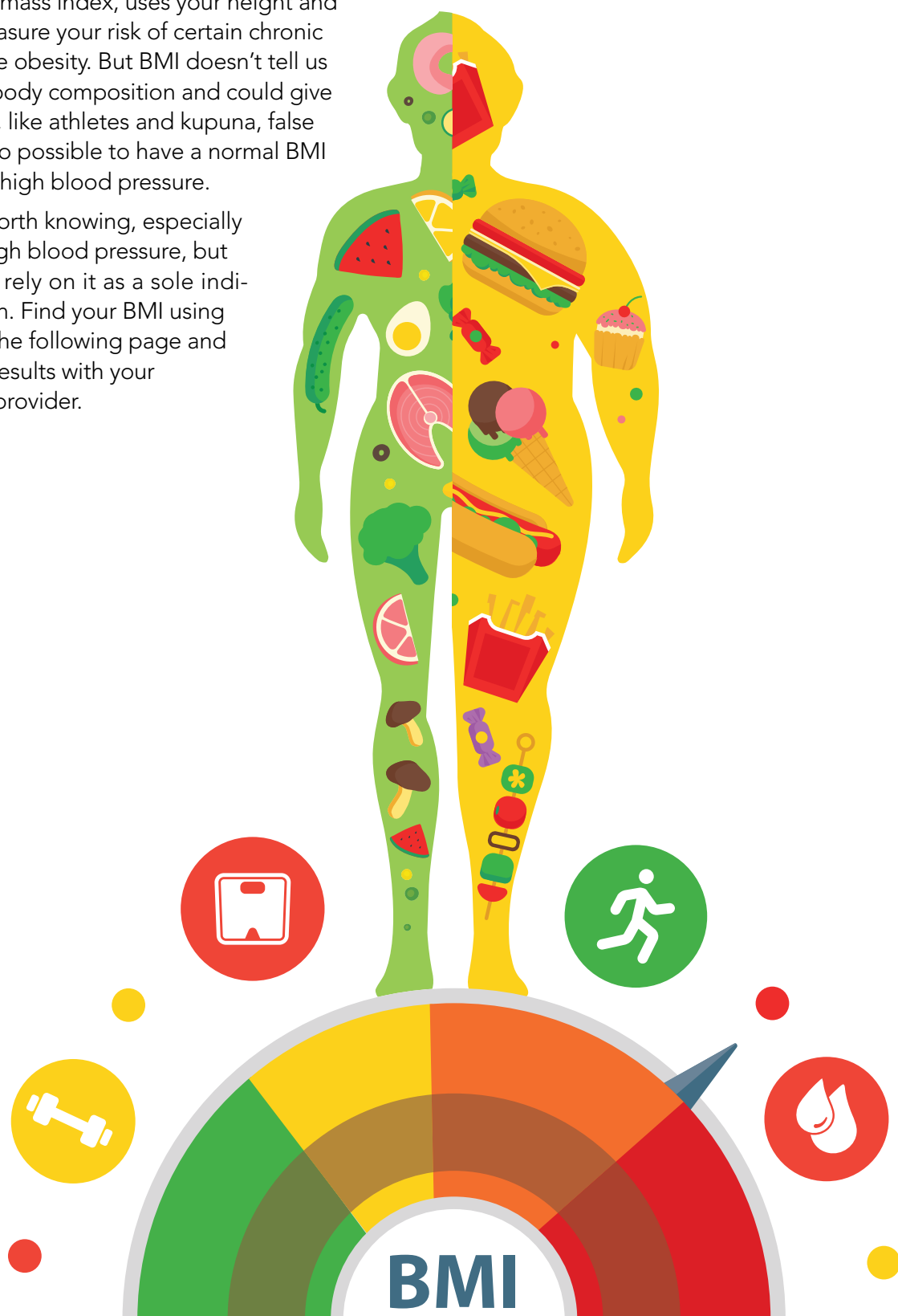
Remember that healthy weight loss takes time. Losing one to two pounds per week is the recommended way to take it off and keep it off. Always talk to your primary care provider before starting a new diet or exercise plan.



## What's BMI got to do with it?

BMI, or body mass index, uses your height and weight to measure your risk of certain chronic conditions like obesity. But BMI doesn't tell us much about body composition and could give some people, like athletes and kupuna, false results. It's also possible to have a normal BMI and still have high blood pressure.

Your BMI is worth knowing, especially if you have high blood pressure, but you shouldn't rely on it as a sole indicator of health. Find your BMI using the chart on the following page and discuss your results with your primary care provider.



# Body Mass Index (BMI)

	HEALTHY						OVERWEIGHT						OBESITY						EXTREME OBESITY														
BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	
WEIGHT (IN POUNDS)																																	
HEIGHT	4'10"	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167	172	177	181	186	191	196	201	205	210	215	220	224	229	234	239
	4'11"	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173	178	183	188	193	198	203	208	212	217	222	227	232	237	242	247
	5'	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	169	173	179	184	189	194	199	204	209	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255
	5'1"	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	190	195	201	206	211	217	222	227	232	238	243	248	254	259	264
	5'2"	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	174	180	185	191	196	202	207	213	218	224	229	235	240	246	251	256	262	267	273
	5'3"	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	192	197	203	208	214	220	225	231	237	242	248	254	259	265	270	278	282
	5'4"	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204	209	215	221	227	232	238	244	250	256	262	267	273	279	285	291
	5'5"	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	228	234	240	246	252	258	264	270	276	282	288	294	300
	5'6"	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	218	223	229	235	241	247	253	260	266	272	278	284	291	297	303	309
	5'7"	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223	230	236	242	249	255	261	268	274	280	287	293	299	306	312	319
	5'8"	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230	236	243	249	256	262	269	276	282	289	295	302	308	315	322	328
	5'9"	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236	243	250	257	263	270	277	284	291	297	304	311	318	324	331	338
	5'10"	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243	250	257	264	271	278	285	292	299	306	313	320	327	334	341	348
	5'11"	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	257	265	272	279	286	293	301	308	315	322	329	338	343	351	358
	6'	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	243	250	258	265	272	279	287	294	302	309	316	324	331	338	346	353	361	368
	6'1"	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265	272	280	288	295	302	310	318	325	333	340	348	355	363	371	378
6'2"	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272	280	287	295	303	311	319	326	334	342	350	358	365	373	381	389	
6'3"	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279	287	295	303	311	319	327	335	343	351	359	367	375	383	391	399	
6'4"	156	164	172	180	189	197	205	213	221	230	238	246	254	263	271	279	287	295	304	312	320	328	336	344	353	361	369	377	385	394	402	410	
REDUCED RISK																	INCREASED RISK																

## Health Risks Associated with Obesity

☐ Insulin resistance (type 2 diabetes)  
☐ Elevated cholesterol  
☐ Sleep apnea  
☐ Osteoarthritis

☐ High blood pressure  
☐ Coronary heart disease  
☐ Stroke  
☐ Many types of cancer

☐ Depression  
☐ Premature death  
☐ Other

Get more from  
<http://www.getforms.org>

# Get the most from medications

Medications can help control high blood pressure, prevent complications like heart attack or stroke, and reduce the risk of heart disease. To be effective, they must be taken as prescribed. Taking medication in the wrong dose or at different times can be dangerous.

Let your doctor know about any new supplements or medications you're taking in case they interact with your blood pressure meds. If you have questions about your medications, your pharmacist is a great resource.

Make sure you know:

- The names of your medications.
- The dosages.
- How often to take them.
- The possible side effects.
- Whether the medications may interact with other drugs you take or with certain foods or beverages.
- What to do if you miss a dose.
- Your blood pressure. Take a reading regularly to help your doctor know how well your meds are working.



**How many of these tricks have you tried to remember to take your medications?**

- ✓ Take your medications at the same time every day and tie them into a routine you already have, like brushing your teeth.
- ✓ Keep them all in one place where you'll always see them.
- ✓ Set an alarm on your smartphone so you'll remember to take your medication.
- ✓ Buy and use a pill sorter, which is available at the drugstore, and refill it at the same time every week.
- ✓ If you need to travel, bring a few extra days' worth of medication, just in case, and stow them in your carry-on bag.

# Blood Pressure Action Plan

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
PCP: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Take this form to your next appointment with your primary care provider. Together, you and your doctor can create a blood pressure goal and develop a plan to achieve it.**

## Medication Management

List all the medications you currently take. Your primary care provider can review this list and help you determine if changes are needed. Tell your doctor if you have problems with any medication.

Name of medication (e.g., metoprolol)	How much to take (e.g., 100 mg)	When to take it (e.g., once daily in the morning)	What is it for (e.g., lower blood pressure)

## Blood Pressure Monitoring

It's important to check your blood pressure regularly. A blood pressure reading consists of two numbers – systolic (the top number) and diastolic (the bottom number). Systolic pressure is created when the heart pumps blood. Diastolic pressure is created when the heart is at rest between beats.

Normal blood pressure      120/80 or less  
Prehypertension            120-139/80-89  
High blood pressure        140/90 or higher

My blood pressure goal is:  Date:

Date/time	Reading		Comments
	Blood pressure	Heart rate (pulse)	
	/		
	/		
	/		
	/		

**Contact your primary care provider if either number exceeds:**

**Systolic**       **Diastolic**



# Blood Pressure Action Plan (continued)

## Controlling Sodium

Sodium increases blood pressure because it holds excess fluid in the body. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods such as canned soup, lunch meat, fast food, pickles, ham, and chips. Read food labels to see which foods are high in sodium and avoid those foods or eat small amounts. Also, don't add salt when cooking or eating. Ask your primary care provider how much sodium you should consume per day.

Here are three high-sodium foods that I can cut back on right now:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Losing Weight

Small changes in your diet can make a big difference to your weight. Losing five pounds can help lower your blood pressure.

Current weight:

My weight	In three months	In six months	In 12 months
Date			
Weight			

Here are four things I can do right now to lose weight:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Planning

Exercising most days of the week for at least 30 minutes a day can help lower your blood pressure. You can break up a day's exercise into three 10-minute segments. Good activities are walking and swimming.

Here are three things I can do right now to be more active:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Smoking, Alcohol, and Stress

Quitting smoking may be the most important thing you can do to lower your blood pressure. You'll also reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke.

I currently smoke  packs/or  cigarettes per day

Goal: Reduce to  packs/or  cigarettes per day

Goal: Quit by (date)

☐ I don't smoke.

Alcohol can increase risk factors associated with hypertension, such as weight gain and elevated blood glucose levels, and can interfere with medications. Decreasing alcohol consumption can help you keep your blood pressure in check.

Goal: Limit amount of alcohol to  drink(s) each week.

☐ I don't drink.

Our bodies release hormones that increase our blood pressure when we're stressed. Chronic stress can lead to hypertension over time. Reducing stress is good for your mental and physical health.

To reduce stress, I will \_\_\_\_\_



## Additional resources

- HMSA Blood Pressure Resources
  - o [hmsa.com/bloodpressure](https://hmsa.com/bloodpressure)
- CDC High Blood Pressure Resources
  - o [cdc.gov/bloodpressure/index.htm](https://cdc.gov/bloodpressure/index.htm)
- American Heart Association Blood Pressure Resources
  - o [heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure](https://heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure)
- Hawaii Health Initiative
  - o [livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/blood-pressure/](https://livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/blood-pressure/)

**Blood pressure monitors are available at your doctor's office, fire stations, and HMSA Centers and offices.**

# We're here with you

[hmsa.com/eutf](https://hmsa.com/eutf)

**Call** (808) 948-6499 or 1 (800) 776-4672 Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Or meet** with knowledgeable, experienced health plan advisers. We'll answer questions about your health plan, give you general health and well-being information, and more. Hours of operation may change. Please go to [hmsa.com/contact](https://hmsa.com/contact) before your visit.

## **HMSA Center in Honolulu**

818 Keeaumoku St.

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

## **HMSA Center in Pearl City**

Pearl City Gateway | 1132 Kuala St., Suite 400

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

## **HMSA Center in Hilo**

Waiakea Center | 303A E. Makaala St.

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

## **HMSA Center in Kahului**

Puunene Shopping Center | 70 Hookele St., Suite 1220

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. | Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

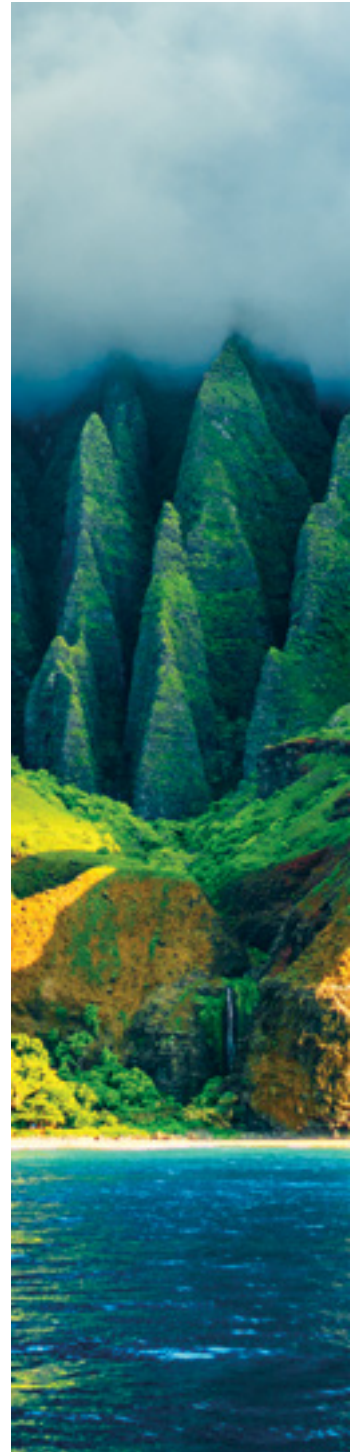
Customer Relations representatives are also available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at:

## **Lihue**

4366 Kukui Grove St., Suite 103 | Phone: (808) 245-3393

[hmsa.com](https://hmsa.com)

     [@hmsahawaii](https://www.instagram.com/hmsahawaii)



Together, we improve the lives of our members and the health of Hawaii.  
Caring for our families, friends, and neighbors is our privilege.

