

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

# REDUCE BLOOD PRESSURE

## What is Blood Pressure?

The force of your blood moving against the walls of your artery blood vessels. It is measured with two numbers:

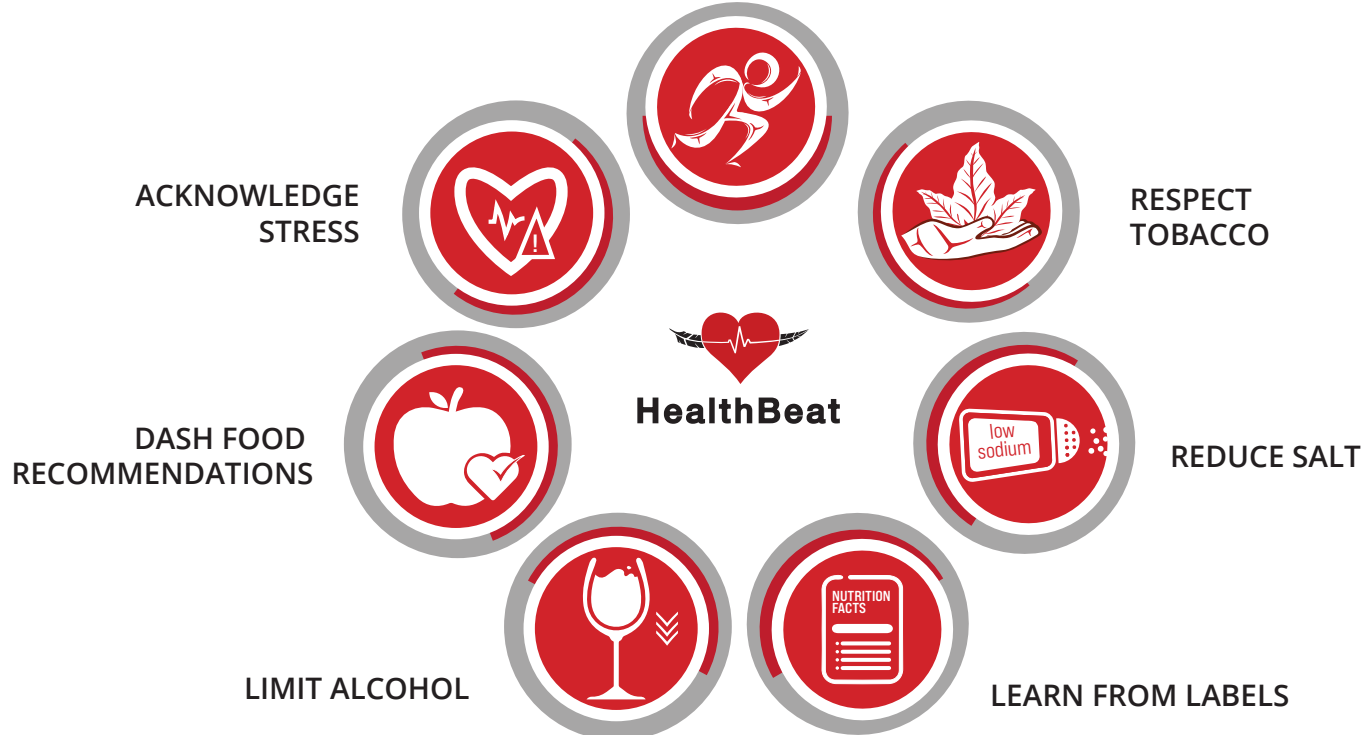
Systolic Blood Pressure: the force in your arteries when your heart **beats**

Diastolic Blood Pressure: the force in your arteries when your heart **relaxes**

## How can I lower my Blood Pressure?

Check and write down your blood pressure at the same time everyday. Check it while sitting down, feet on the ground for at least 10 minutes before you test. This will help you see the benefits of the lifestyles changes you are making. Connect with a health care provider, Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn more about plants that can support your journey in taking control of your blood pressure such as hawthorn.

### MOVE YOUR BODY



**ISPARC**  
Indigenous Sport,  
Physical Activity & Recreation Council



First Nations Health Authority



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

**Canada**

There are many parts of our society that affect our health and lives that are beyond an individual's level of control. We want to acknowledge the social, political, economic, and environmental impacts to the health of the lands, waters, and forests, which in turn affects our health. We want you to know we are here to support you with your wellness goals and will meet you wherever you are at in your wellness journey.



## MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity is medicine! Find ways to move that you enjoy or in places you enjoy like a park, trail, lakeside, or in your neighbourhood. Start with small changes, even as little as 10 minutes a day and add to it. Go for a short walk on your lunch break, do chair exercises, try a short exercise video at home. Take a walking phone call with a friend or a walking meeting. Find an activity buddy!



## LEARN FROM LABELS

Check out food labels! Aim for foods that have less than 5% DV (daily value) sodium (salt) and avoid foods with more than 15% DV sodium.



## RESPECT TOBACCO

Even if you have been using commercial tobacco for many years, you can improve your health by quitting. Many people find success if they make a quit plan and gather supports. The First Nations Health Authority's (FNHA) website also has resources available, including a tobacco podcast series!



## LIMIT ALCOHOL

If you drink, consider limiting your consumption to lower your health risk, as reducing your alcohol intake by any amount can improve your health. For healthy adults, 0-2 drinks per week is considered low-risk, 3-6 moderate risk, and 7+ per week is high-risk.



## REDUCE SALT

Choose lower salt foods. Most of the salt (sodium) in our diet comes from processed foods such as canned and packaged foods (soups, sauces, soya sauce, premade dinners, instant noodles, boxed pastas, canned foods) and processed meats (ham, bologna, bacon). Restaurant and take-away meals are often high in salt. Food is medicine, we encourage you to cook with and enjoy lots of fresh foods like veggies, fruit, berries, fish, game, and wild foods - they have very little salt in their fresh form and are high in potassium which is good for your heart!



## ACKNOWLEDGE STRESS

Acknowledge stress and its impact on blood pressure and your wellness! Connect to nature, water, culture, art, and family and friends. Sleep and eat well. Tap into your creativity, try meditation, breathing exercises, and ensure self-care with boundaries.



## DASH FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

Check out the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) food recommendations! DASH has been shown to reduce blood pressure and is packed full of high potassium foods including berries, fruits, vegetables, nuts (including peanut butter), seeds, legumes (lentils and beans) and includes fish and lean meats.\* If you have kidney issues, speak to your doctor or health care professional to ask if a high potassium diet is OK for you.

*\*Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

## Where you can find more information and support



Connect with your doctor, community health nurse, or pharmacist to receive support to take control of your blood pressure.



Visit for more information about:  
**Blood Pressure:** [heartandstroke.ca/bloodpressure](http://heartandstroke.ca/bloodpressure)  
**DASH Recommendations:** <http://nada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Nutrition-for-High-Blood-Pressure.pdf>



Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak with a registered nurse, a Registered Dietitian, a qualified exercise professional, or a pharmacist.