

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.  
Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

**Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.**

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

**Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.**

High Blood Pressure: How to Get it Under Control

[http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy\\_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200729](http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200729)

Dear Savvy Senior,

My 60-year-old husband who has high blood pressure takes his medication as prescribed but can never seem to get it under control. He is, however, a little overweight and doesn't exercise like he should, but we thought the medication was supposed to resolve the problem. What can you tell us?

Worried Wife

Dear Worried,

Many people with high blood pressure think that taking their medication is enough to get their condition [while] under control ignoring important lifestyle changes but it doesn't usually work. Here's what you should know.

### **Out of Control**

A recent study done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that while most Americans with high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) are taking some steps to combat their condition, only 30% actually have it under control. That means the 70% of adults with high blood pressure need to do more to bring those levels down, including changing their diet, exercising as well as sticking to their prescribed drug regimens. Untreated, high blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and even blindness.

### **What To Do**

High blood pressure can almost always be controlled, but it's not always as easy as just popping a pill. Here are some healthy suggestions that can help.

#### **Eat smart**

A healthy diet can lower hypertension 10 to 20 points. A diet for better blood pressure emphasizes fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, poultry, fish, and nuts. The DASH eating plan, which stands for "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension" is a great guide to help you get started. See [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp) - click on "Prevention" then "Healthy Eating."

#### **Control your weight**

If you're overweight, losing even 5 pounds can lower your blood pressure.

#### **Get moving**

Regular exercise can lower blood pressure by 10 points, prevent the onset of high blood pressure, or let you reduce your dosage of blood pressure medications.

#### **Don't smoke**

Smoking a cigarette can cause a 20-point spike in systolic blood pressure.

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation:

Going beyond a drink a day can contribute to higher blood pressure.

### Shake up your salts

Too much sodium and too little potassium can boost blood pressure. Aim for no more than 1,500 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day, and at least 4,700 mg of potassium from fruits and vegetables.

### Sleep is good

Too little sleep can contribute to high blood pressure. Get at least six hours a night.

### Reduce stress.

Mental and emotional stress can raise blood pressure. Meditation and deep breathing can lower it. A tool that can help is Resperate ([www.resperate.com](http://www.resperate.com)). This is a non-drug, over-the-counter, portable electronic device that uses rhythmic tones to slow your breathing pace which helps lower blood pressure. It really does work and costs \$299.

### Stick with your medications

If your doctor has you on high blood pressure medication, taking it as prescribed can keep you from having a stroke or heart attack.

## Get Checked

The tricky thing about high blood pressure is that it usually causes no outward symptoms. In fact, nearly one-third of the 65 million Americans that have it don't even know it. The only way to know for sure is to have your blood pressure checked by your doctor. If you find you have hypertension or prehypertension, consider buying a home blood pressure unit to monitor your blood pressure between doctor's visits. They cost around \$100.

## What's Too High?

High blood pressure is defined as 140/90 or higher. If your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 139/89, you have prehypertension, which means you may be at risk for developing high blood pressure in the future. Normal blood pressure is below 120/80.

**Savvy Note:** A common problem for many seniors is that the first number in their blood pressure reading (systolic) is often high (greater than 140), but the second number (diastolic) is normal (less than 90).