

# HEALTH MATTERS

## Preventing And Controlling High Blood Pressure Could Save Millions Of Lives

(NAPSA)—More Americans are aware of the link between high blood pressure (HBP) and other health problems than in the past, yet the number of people in the U.S. with HBP has actually increased over the past decade. This news is significant, because HBP leads to 60 percent of the heart attacks, 77 percent of the strokes and 74 percent of all cases of heart failure in the U.S. each year.

Beginning this May during National High Blood Pressure Education Month, Americans are being asked to join the mission to combat high blood pressure by taking steps to prevent or control it personally and in their families and communities. This call to action comes from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NHLBI is sponsoring a new educational initiative called "Prevent and Control High Blood Pressure: Mission Possible." It has one goal, which is to reduce the more than one million heart attacks, strokes, and kidney failure cases caused by HBP each year.

### What Is High Blood Pressure?

A blood pressure reading of 140/90 mmHg or higher is considered high. Optimal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mmHg.

### Who's At Risk?

Anyone can develop high blood pressure. However, risk factors include being overweight or obese, being physically inactive, high salt and sodium intake, excessive alcohol consumption, and diabetes.

### Preventing and Controlling High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure can be prevented, and it can be controlled. Here is what you can do:

<b>High blood pressure</b>
140/90 mmHg or higher
<b>Prehypertension</b>
between 120-39 and/or 80-89 mmHg
<b>Optimal blood pressure</b>
less than 120/80 mmHg 

**Americans are being asked to take action to prevent and control high blood pressure—a leading factor in more than half of all heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure cases in the U.S. each year.**

- Lose weight if needed, and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and low fat dairy foods. Also, limit saturated fat, cholesterol, and salt intake.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.
- Be physically active. Try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate-level activity each day.
- Ask your health care professional what your blood pressure numbers are and what they mean.
- Quit smoking.
- Control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.
- Take your blood pressure medication as prescribed.

For more information about how to prevent and control high blood pressure visit [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov).