

Your doctor may tell you that you have hypertension, high blood pressure, or borderline hypertension. This is a common condition that if untreated can lead to other health problems.

When your blood pressure is controlled, you can help prevent heart damage, stroke, or kidney disease. Working with your doctor can help you manage your blood pressure.

People with high blood pressure usually do not have symptoms. Sometimes they may have headaches or changes in their vision. The only way to know is to check your blood pressure.



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Care coordination and integration

Geisinger Health Plan offers the following case and health management programs to members:

- Asthma
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Heart failure
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Osteoporosis
- Tobacco cessation (quitting)
- Weight management

For more information, call 800-883-6355 or 570-214-8649, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. TTY/TDD users should call 711.

Hypertension

What is high blood pressure?

Normally your heart easily pumps or pushes blood through your blood vessels. When you have high blood pressure, your blood vessels are narrow. This means it takes more pressure to push blood through them and makes your heart work harder.

The most common reason your blood vessels become narrow is plaque build up. Plaque is cholesterol that hardens on the walls of the blood vessels.

Smoking can also make your blood vessels narrow. Nicotine and other chemicals mixed in tobacco can cause the muscles around the blood vessels to tighten. This makes the vessels narrow.

Understanding your blood pressure reading

A blood pressure reading has two numbers, for example 124/63. When your heart beats, it contracts and pushes blood through the arteries to the rest of the body. This force creates pressure on the arteries. This is called systolic blood pressure, the top number in a blood pressure reading. The diastolic blood pressure, or the bottom number, indicates the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between beats.

When you have high blood pressure your readings are above 140/90. Borderline high blood pressure are readings between 120/80 and 140/90.

<u>120</u>	Systolic
80	Diastolic

Lifestyle changes

Start by working with your doctor to make a few changes to your lifestyle:

- Eat a healthy diet low in salt (sodium) and fat
- Be more active throughout the day
- Aim for eight hours of sleep each night
- Manage your stress
- Lose weight
- If you use tobacco, stop
- Limit alcohol

Take your medicine

When changing your lifestyle is not enough, your doctor will give you medicine. Each medicine works a little differently. Sometimes it takes more than one medicine to control high blood pressure.

You can help your medicine work by limiting the amount of sodium you eat. Choose foods low in salt. Aim for less than 2,300 mg a day, which is about 1 teaspoon.

It is important to take your medicine the way your doctor tells you, even if you feel well. Never stop your medicine without talking to your doctor.

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)

Following the DASH eating plan is one way to lower your blood pressure. It encourages you to eat more:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Low fat or fat-free dairy products
- Fish
- Beans
- Lean meat

The DASH eating plan also encourages you to eat less:

- Foods high in fat
- Foods with higher amounts of salt



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Your food may taste bland when you first begin to eat low-sodium foods. Don't give up! Within a few weeks your taste buds will get used to less salty foods.

What is our mission?

Our mission is to help members be as healthy as possible. As a member, you can get expert help to better manage your condition - all at no extra charge. Participation is voluntary and in no way affects the status of your healthcare coverage.

Geisinger Health Plan believes our care coordination program can be beneficial in improving or maintaining your health.

How can I learn more?

To take advantage of this program, call 800-883-6355 or 570-214-8649, speak with your healthcare provider or visit us on the web at TheHealthPlan.com.

The program will:

- Help you better understand your condition
- Update you on new information
- Provide assistance from a nurse who is trained to help members with their specialized healthcare needs