

# Living Well Tip of the Week

## High Blood Pressure & Cholesterol

Every 39 seconds, a person dies from heart attack, stroke, or other vascular disease.

**How do I know if I have high blood pressure?** Getting your blood pressure checked is important because high blood pressure often has no symptoms. Your doctor can measure your blood pressure, or you can use a machine available at many pharmacies. You also can use a home monitoring device to measure your blood pressure. Normal blood pressure is defined as 120/80 mm Hg. If the systolic number (the first one) is greater than 140 mm Hg or the diastolic (second) number is greater than 90 mm Hg, you may have high blood pressure.

### What can I do about my high cholesterol?

If you have high cholesterol, your doctor may pre-scribe medications and suggest lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating and exercise. Controlling LDL cholesterol is the primary focus of treatment. Your treatment plan will depend on your current LDL level and risk for heart disease and stroke. Your risk for heart disease and stroke depends on other risk factors, including high blood pressure, smoking status, age, HDL level, and family history of early heart disease. In addition, people with existing cardiovascular dis-ease or diabetes are at high risk for high cholesterol.

### How can I prevent high blood pressure and/or cholesterol?

- Eat a healthy diet that is low in salt; low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol; and rich in fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Take a brisk 10-minute walk, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.
- Don't smoke. If you do smoke, quit as soon as possible.
- Get an Annual Physical (Always talk with your doctor to decide which screening tests are best for you and how often you may need them.)



**Did You Know?** UT SELECT Medical now provides 100% coverage for Preventive Screenings and provides Free Smoking/Tobacco Cessation Programs available to all UT SELECT members. Learn more at [www.LivingWell.utsystem.edu](http://www.LivingWell.utsystem.edu).

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