

Lifestyle changes can help you control and prevent high blood pressure, even if you are taking blood pressure medication.

- **Eat healthy foods**, emphasizing vegetables, fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Be sure to get enough potassium, which can help control or prevent high blood pressure. Eat less saturated fat and total fat. Limit the amount of sodium in your diet to 1,500 mg per day.
- **Maintain a healthy weight**. If you are overweight, losing even 5 pounds can lower your blood pressure.
- **Increase physical activity**. 30 minutes (or more) of physical activity per day can help lower your blood pressure.
- **Limit alcohol**. Alcohol can raise your blood pressure. If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
- **Don't smoke**. Tobacco injures blood vessel walls and speeds up the process of hardening of the arteries.
- **Manage stress**. Reduce stress as much as possible. Practice healthy coping techniques, such as muscle relaxation and deep breathing. Get plenty of sleep.

Practice slow, deep breathing. Devices are available over-the-counter to analyze breathing patterns and help guide inhalation and exhalation.