



High Blood Pressure

2

Module 2: High Blood Pressure



► Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Define high blood pressure
- List the risk factors for high blood pressure and heart disease
- State the recommended blood pressure numbers
- Complete the medication log
- Name the medication classes often used to treat high blood pressure
- List ways to reduce sodium from your diet
- Prepare an action plan

► Outline

- A. Introduction **10 minutes**
- B. Discussion: "Definition of High Blood Pressure" **10 minutes**
- C. Group Activity: "Activity Cards" **15 minutes**
- D. Discussion: "Sodium, Salt, and High Blood Pressure" **15 minutes**
- E. Group Activity: "My Medicine" **30 minutes**
(omit for the 60-minute version)
- F. Action Plan **5 minutes**
- G. Closing **5 minutes**

► Materials

- Flip Chart
- Markers
- Activity Cards (printable)
- Pencils/Pens
- Name Cards
- Refreshments (optional)

► Handouts

- "High Blood Pressure: What You Need to Know"
- Tips to Reduce the Use of Sodium
- Medication Log
- Action Plan to help you manage your high blood pressure

► Printable Materials

Before the session, print all of the handouts and forms, ensuring that you will have enough for each participant or group as required

- Activity C: "Activity Cards." Print 1 card for each of the 2 groups
- Activity E: "My Medicine" Print a copy of the medication log for each participant
- Action Plan F: Print 1 Action Plan for each participant
- Closing G: Print 1 copy of the "High Blood Pressure: What You Need to Know" handout for each participant

► Forms

- Attendance Sheet

Lesson Plan



A. Introduction – 10 minutes

- Create a welcoming atmosphere. Warmly greet participants as they walk into the room, and ask them to sign the attendance sheet.
- Write each participant's name on a name card
- When everyone is seated, formally introduce yourself
- Ask participants to introduce themselves to the group
- Explain to participants that the duration of the session will be 60 or 90 minutes
- Inform participants that during this session they can expect the following:
 1. Group discussions on the topic of high blood pressure
 2. Various activities to learn about how to reduce your risk of high blood pressure in a fun way
 3. Think and share on topics related to high blood pressure
- Encourage participants to ask questions at any time during the session
- Be sure to mention the location of restrooms and water fountains
- Set rules with the group by asking participants for suggestions. Write their responses on the flip chart. Some suggestions for ground rules are in the following "Tip" box.

TIP

Some suggestions for the ground rules may include:

- Turn cell phones off
- Keep discussions confidential
- Ask questions
- No side bars – direct questions to the facilitator or group so that everyone can hear the discussion





B. “Definition of High Blood Pressure” – 10 minutes

1. Begin a group discussion by asking participants the following question.
Write their responses on the flip chart.

- What is high blood pressure?

The “Key Points” box provides some information that could be used as a part of this group discussion. You can use the key points to encourage group discussion if participants are not participating.



Key Points for Discussion B

*Reminder: Refrain from reading content word for word.
Try to establish eye contact with participants.*

High blood pressure is one of the most common health problems health care providers diagnose. Blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of the blood vessels that run through your body. It is 2 forces: one is the force caused by your heart as it pumps blood through your body and the other force comes from your blood vessels as they resist the blood pumped by your heart.

Your blood pressure is written as 2 numbers, such as 120/80. You might hear your health care provider say a

blood pressure is “120 over 80.” The first number is the systolic (sis-TAH-lik) measure. This is the pressure when your heart contracts. The second number is the diastolic (dye-uh-STAH-lik) measure. This is the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats.

If your numbers are 140/90 or more, you have high blood pressure. The medical term for high blood pressure is hypertension (hi-per-TEN-shun). Some people have pre-hypertension. Their blood pressure is more than 120/80 but less than 140/90.

TIP

If participants are silent you may want to ask questions, for example:

- 1) *When your blood pressure is high, how do you feel?*
- 2) *What do you do when you feel that way?*
- 3) *What did your health care provider recommend for you to do when you feel this?*



C. “Activity Cards” – 15 minutes

Purpose

To guide participants toward understanding the difference between controllable and non-controllable risk factors for high blood pressure.

Material

- Markers
- Flip Chart
- Two Cards, each with different information about risk factors for high blood pressure.

Process

1. Explain to participants that during this activity they will learn about the risk factors for high blood pressure. See the “Sample Instructions” in the next section for additional points to cover when introducing this activity.
2. Divide the group into 2 teams.
3. Provide each team with a Risk Factor activity card.
4. Give participants 5 minutes to read, discuss the information on the cards, and answer the question listed on the bottom of the card.
5. Let the teams know when time is almost finished. Notify them about 2 minutes before the time is up.
6. Ask participants to select 1 member from each team to report back to the group. They should explain the information on their card and share their team’s response to the question.
7. After the teams finish reporting back to the group, your responsibility as facilitator is to clarify or provide additional information. See the “Key Points” box that follows for things that should be covered by the facilitator or the group during the activity.
8. To conclude the activity, thank everyone for their participation.

CONTROLLABLE RISKS FACTORS

The risks for high blood pressure and heart disease you can control are:

- Weighing too much
- Eating too much salt
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Getting too little physical activity
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Having too much stress in your life

NON CONTROLLABLE RISKS FACTORS

The risks you can’t control are:

- Race: high blood pressure tends to occur more often and earlier and be worse for African Americans
- Heredity: If your parents have high blood pressure, you are likely to have it, too
- Age: the older you get, the greater the risk for high blood pressure

Note: Activity Cards may be found under Printable Materials.

Sample Instructions for Activity C

This is a sample of how to introduce the activity. You should use your own words to explain the activity to the group.

Now, to start our discussion on the risk factors for high blood pressure, we are going to conduct an activity. It’s going to be fun and easy, so please try to relax, and let me explain what we will be doing.

First, we are going to be working in small teams, and I’m going to provide each team with a card. Read the information, discuss it, and come up with an answer to the question at the bottom of the card. Do not worry about memorizing all the information on the card; the purpose is to understand the information presented.

Then 1 person from each team will present their team’s information and the answer to the question to the entire group. The group may ask questions and may add 1 or 2 additional points.

You will have 5 minutes to meet with your team members. If you are having trouble reading the information, please ask for help, and don’t feel embarrassed; for example, you may have forgotten your glasses. Let me know how I can assist you.

If everyone is ready, we will begin. Remember, we are here to learn together, not to criticize, judge, or make fun of anyone. So relax and enjoy the activity.

TIP

During the 5-minute team session, you should walk around the room and offer your help to the participants. You should have a friendly and positive attitude. Do not criticize the participants or make any negative remarks.



Key Points for Activity C

Reminder: Refrain from reading content word for word. Try to establish eye contact with participants.

The American Heart Association (AHA) says you can lower your risk for high blood pressure; however some risk factors can't be controlled.

The risks you can't control are:

- **Race** – high blood pressure tends to occur more often and earlier and be worse for African Americans
- **Heredity** – if your parents have high blood pressure, you are likely to have it, too
- **Age** – the older you get, the greater the risk for high blood pressure

The risks you can control are:

- Weighing too much
- Eating too much salt
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Getting too little physical activity
- Having too much stress in your life

(only for some people and stress levels may vary)

Note: A risk is a factor associated with an increased chance for something to happen. For example, it may be an increased chance of developing a disease or infection.



D. “Sodium, Salt, and High Blood Pressure” – 15 minutes

1. Begin a group discussion by asking participants the following questions. Write their responses on the flip chart.

- What is sodium?
- How much sodium do we need?

The “Key Points” box provides some information that could be used as a part of this group discussion. You can use the key points to encourage group discussion if participants are silent at first.



Key Points for Discussion D

Reminder: Refrain from reading content word for word. Try to establish eye contact with participants.

Eating less salt and sodium can help you prevent high blood pressure or lower blood pressure. You probably know what salt is, but you may wonder what sodium is. Sodium is a part of salt. It is also used to flavor and preserve foods.

How much sodium do we need? The body only needs about 500 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day. That’s about slightly less than ¼ teaspoon of salt. Most people are eating much more than 500 mg of sodium every day. You should limit the amount of sodium you get from all foods and beverages to less than 2,300 mg of sodium, or about 1 teaspoon of salt per day. Some people may need to limit their sodium intake to less than 1,500 mg per day.



Tips to reduce the use of sodium:

- Buy fresh, frozen, or no-salt-added canned vegetables. Choose food packed in water instead of broth or salt.
- Buy fresh garlic or garlic powder instead of garlic salt.
- Choose foods labeled low sodium, sodium free, or no salt added.



- Slowly cut back on the amount of salt added when cooking until you don’t use any.
- Add little or no salt to the water when cooking beans, rice, pasta, and vegetables.
- Rinse all canned products to reduce the amount of sodium.



- Fill the saltshaker with a mixture of herbs and spices.
- Slowly cut back on the amount of salt added at the table or remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Choose fruits and vegetables instead of salty snacks like chips, fries and pork.



E. Activity: “My Medicine”– 30 minutes

Note: This activity may be omitted if you must conduct this module as a 60-minute session.

Purpose

To create awareness on the importance of checking the dosage, exact name, and amounts of the medications participants are taking.

Material

- Medication Log

Name	Pill Description (color, shape, size)	Amount	How Often	When to Take	What is it for	Take with Food
Aspirin	Round, white	81 mg	1 daily	Morning	My Heart	Yes

Process

1. Explain to participants that during this activity they will learn about medications often used to control high blood pressure.
2. Provide each participant with a copy of the medication log.
3. Give participants 5 minutes to write the medications that may have been prescribed to control their high blood pressure. It is okay if someone doesn't know the name of their medication or amount.
4. Let the participants know when time is almost finished. Notify them about 2 minutes before the time is up.
5. Ask the group the following questions:
 - Why are medication logs important?
 - Do you keep a medication log?
6. The responsibility of the facilitator is to clarify or provide additional information on the importance of taking medications. See the “Key Points” box for things that should be covered by the facilitator.
7. The facilitator will close the activity by emphasizing the importance of taking their medication as prescribed by their health provider and if they don't know their medication name or amount to take, they should talk with their health care provider or pharmacist.



Key Points for Activity E

There are different types of medications that may be used to control high blood pressure. You may be on one medication or several medications, so it is important to talk with your health care provider or pharmacist.

These are examples of medications used to control high blood pressure:

Blood Pressure Medications

Medication Category	How they work
Diuretics	These are sometimes called “water pills” because they work in the kidney and flush excess water and sodium from the body through urine.
Beta-blockers	These reduce nerve impulses to the heart and blood vessels. This makes the heart beat less often and with less force. Blood pressure drops, and the heart works less hard.
Angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors	These prevent the formation of a hormone called angiotensin II, which normally causes blood vessels to narrow. The blood vessels relax, and pressure goes down.
Direct renin inhibitors	These prevent the formation of angiotensin I and, thereby, angiotensin II. These help blood vessels relax and widen so blood pressure is lowered.
Angiotensin antagonists	These shield blood vessels from angiotensin II. As a result, the blood vessels open wider, and pressure goes down.
Calcium channel blockers	These keep calcium from entering the muscle cells of the heart and blood vessels. Blood vessels relax, and pressure goes down.
Alpha-blockers	These reduce nerve impulses to blood vessels, allowing blood to pass more easily.
Alpha-beta-blockers	These work the same way as alpha-blockers but also slow the heartbeat, as beta-blockers do.
Nervous system inhibitors	These relax blood vessels by controlling nerve impulses.
Vasodilators	These directly open blood vessels by relaxing the muscle in the vessel walls.

“Adapted from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)”



F. Action Plan – 5 minutes

Pass out an action plan to each participant. Ask each participant to:

1. Review the items on the action plan.
2. Select an item(s) that they will try to change or improve.
3. Ask the participants to ask themselves the following questions:
 - What behavior would I like to change?
 - Is it a behavior that I can do?
 - What must I do to achieve this change?
 - When will I make this change?
4. Ask participants to select their confidence level for the chosen behavior to change. Participants should select a number on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, indicating how confident they feel about completing their action plan. If a participant's confidence level is less than 7, ask him/her to consider an easier plan.



G. Closing – 5 minutes

Distribute and explain the “High Blood Pressure: What You Need to Know” handout. Invite the group to ask questions about the handout. Thank the participants for their attendance and participation. Invite them to return to the next session, and encourage them to bring a family member or friend.



Key Points for Action Plan

Emphasize to the group the importance of an action plan and how it relates to improving and maintaining a healthy life. Lifestyle changes are made one step at a time. Therefore, participants need to be ready, willing and able to make changes that will improve their chances for a better and healthier life.

