

# Be in Charge of your Blood Pressure

Do you know what your blood pressure numbers are? Nearly 1 out of 3 adults has high blood pressure, also called hypertension. The rate is higher for African Americans.

High blood pressure lasts a lifetime. So does managing high blood pressure.

Here are some things you can do to improve your blood pressure control.

- Take your blood pressure medicines!
  - Know their names and take them as directed.
  - Refill your medicines before they run out.
  - Don't stop taking your medicines unless you are told to. If you have problems or side effects from your medicines, call your provider.
  - Know your blood pressure goal.
  - Keep track of your blood pressure – write it down, keep a log.
  - Keep your appointments.
- Maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, losing as little as 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure. Talk with your health care team for more information about weight management. Visit the *MOVE!* Web site, [www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov).
- Eat a healthy diet. Using the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan can help lower blood pressure. DASH focuses on eating more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products. The DASH eating plan is low in cholesterol, saturated fat, and sodium or salt. [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new\\_dash.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf)
- Get physically active. Aim for 150 minutes of activity spread over the week, in at least 10 minute blocks. Make activity part of your day. For example: take the stairs, park further away from the entrance, or go for a walk.
- Limit alcohol. Men should have no more than 2 drinks per day and women no more than 1. One drink = 12 oz of beer or 5 oz of wine or 1½ oz of liquor.



**Managing your high blood pressure takes effort.  
You and your health are worth it!!!**