



I can't afford my medications. What can I do?

Contact the Partnership for Prescription Assistance. The Partnership for Prescription Assistance offers a single point of access to more than 475 public and private patient assistance programs, including more than 180 programs offered by pharmaceutical companies. To access the Partnership for Prescription Assistance by phone, you can call Toll-Free, 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669) or on the internet at <https://www.pparx.org/Intro.php>

I have high blood pressure but I don't want to take a pill. What can I do to avoid this?

Patients with high blood pressure can make enough impact through Lifestyle changes to equal that of a single hypertension medication.¹ The following lifestyle modifications are considered the first line treatment in hypertension management. While they are a part of management for all patients, more severe cases of high blood pressure may still require medical treatment as well.

Adopt a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables and low fat dairy products. Studies have shown an average reduction in blood pressure of 8—14 mmHg^{1,2} in patients with Prehypertension or Stage 1 Hypertension. More information is available through a dietitian or online at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash

Reduce sodium intake. Most of your dietary sodium comes from processed foods, not from adding salt from a shaker. Check the nutrition label and reduce your sodium intake to 2.4 g per day. This could result in a decrease in your blood pressure of 2-8 mmHg¹⁻³

Stop smoking. Smoking cigarettes can temporarily increase blood pressure 10-15 mm Hg after each cigarette. Smokers often actually have a higher blood pressure than when they are in the doctor's office and cannot smoke.

Moderate consumption of alcohol. Drinking three or more drinks per day five or more days per week stimulates the sympathetic nervous system resulting in increases in blood pressure. Limiting consumption to one or two drinks per day can result in a decrease of 2-4 mm Hg⁶.

Engage in aerobic exercise such as brisk walking, swimming, or jogging for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Doing so could reduce your blood pressure by 4-9 mm Hg^{4,5}

Lose weight. For every 10 kgs (22 lbs) of excess weight lost blood pressure can be reduced by 5-10 mm hg^{7,8}.

I have high cholesterol, what can I do to avoid taking medications?

Just as with high blood pressure, Lifestyle changes in high cholesterol can equal the effects of a medication such as a statin like Zocor.⁹ While changes to your lifestyle are important, they may not completely control your cholesterol levels and may not replace medication in all patients, but should still be implemented as part of a comprehensive cholesterol treatment.

- The American Heart Association recommends that you keep your intake of total fat to between 25 percent and 35 percent, your saturated fat consumption to less than 7 percent and your intake of trans fat to less than 1 percent of your total daily calories.
- Restrict sugars and simple carbohydrates.
- Take a fish oil supplement.
- Engage in aerobic exercise for 30-45 minutes 5-6 days per week. Activities include jogging, swimming, walking, and others.
- Stop smoking. Cigarettes are a major risk factor for heart disease.

What are the leading testing requirements in the state of Iowa?

Lead poisoning affects 1 in 14 Iowa children, which is four times the national average. As such, House file 158 passed by the Iowa legislature requires that after July 1, 2008 all children entering kindergarten or transferring from other states to be tested for lead. The child is required to be tested before the age of six or upon transferring to Iowa.

- Parents of children who have not met the requirement will be notified by the state and referred to the healthcare provider of their choice.
- If a child already has a record of lead testing on file with the Iowa Department of Public Health, a new testing is not needed.
- Hawk-I and Medicare do cover the test as well as many insurance companies. If you can not pay for the test, contact the Iowa Department of Public Health for assistance.
- If you have a religious objection, a form for an exemption is available at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/common/pdf/lead/exemption.pdf>

For more information about lead poisoning and how you can protect your children, contact one of the following agencies:

Iowa Department of Public Health

1 (800) 972-2026

(515) 281-3479

or your local city or county health department or housing agency.

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- The Trials of Hypertension Prevention Collaborative Research Group. Effects of weight loss and sodium reduction intervention on blood pressure and hypertension incidence in overweight people with high-normal blood pressure. The Trials of Hypertension Prevention, phase II. *Arch Intern Med.* 1997;157:657-67.
- He J, Whelton PK, Appel LJ, Charleston J, Klag MJ. Long-term effects of weight loss and dietary sodium reduction on incidence of hypertension. *Hypertension* 2000;35:544-9.
- Becker DJ, Gordon RY, Morris PB, Yoroko J, Gordon YJ, LiM, Iqbal N. Simvastatin vs therapeutic lifestyle changes and supplements: randomized primary prevention trial. *Mayo Clin Proc.* 2008 Jul;83(7):758-64.