

Golden Edition

July, August and September 2023

High Blood Pressure and Older Adults

by National Institute on Aging

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a major health problem that is common in older adults. Your body's network of blood vessels, known as the vascular system, changes with age. Arteries get stiffer, causing blood pressure to go up. This can be true even for people who have heart-healthy habits and feel just fine. High blood pressure, sometimes called "the silent killer," often doesn't cause signs of illness that you can see or feel. Though high blood pressure affects nearly half of all adults, many may not even be aware they have it.

If high blood pressure isn't controlled with lifestyle changes and medication, it can lead to serious health problems, including cardiovascular disease (such as heart disease and stroke), vascular dementia, eye problems, and kidney disease. The good news is that blood pressure can be controlled in most people.

What is blood pressure? Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of arteries as the heart pumps blood. When a health care professional measures your blood pressure, they use a blood pressure cuff around your arm that tightens and then gradually loosens. The results are given in two numbers. The first number, called systolic blood pressure, is the pressure caused by your heart contracting and pushing out blood. The second number, called diastolic blood pressure, is the pressure when your heart relaxes and fills with blood.

A blood pressure reading is given as the systolic blood pressure number over the diastolic blood pressure number. Blood pressure levels are classified based on those two numbers. A blood pressure reading is given as the systolic blood pressure number over the diastolic blood pressure number. Blood pressure levels are classified based on those two numbers.

Low blood pressure, or hypotension, is systolic blood pressure lower than 90 or diastolic blood pressure lower than 60. If you have low blood pressure, you may feel lightheaded, weak, dizzy, or even faint. It can be caused by not getting enough fluids, blood loss, some medical conditions, or medications, including those prescribed for high blood pressure.

Normal blood pressure for most adults is defined as a systolic pressure of less than 120 and a diastolic pressure of less than 80.

Elevated blood pressure is defined as a systolic pressure between 120 and 129 with a diastolic pressure of less than 80.

High blood pressure is defined as systolic pressure of 130 or higher, or a diastolic pressure of 80 or higher.

For older adults, often the first number (systolic) is 130 or higher, but the second number (diastolic) is less than 80. This problem is called isolated systolic hypertension and is due to age-related stiffening of the major arteries. It is the most common form of high blood pressure in older adults and can lead to serious health problems in addition to shortness of breath during light physical activity, lightheadedness upon standing too fast, and falls.

One reason to visit your doctor regularly is to have your blood pressure checked and, if needed, plan how to manage your blood pressure.

How can I control my blood pressure? You can often lower your blood pressure by changing your day-to-day habits and by taking medication if needed. Treatment requires ongoing evaluation and discussions with your doctor, especially if you have other medical conditions such as diabetes.

Lifestyle changes you can make to help prevent and lower high blood pressure: Aim for a healthy weight, Exercise, Eat a heart-healthy diet, Drink less alcohol, Don't smoke, Get a good night's sleep and Manage stress

In addition to recommending lifestyle changes, your doctor will likely prescribe medication to lower your blood pressure to a safe level. Isolated systolic hypertension, the most common form of high blood pressure in older adults, is treated in the same way as regular high blood pressure but may require more than one type of blood pressure medication. You may try several kinds or combinations of medications before finding a plan that works best for you. Medication can control your blood pressure, but it can't cure it. If your doctor starts you on medication for high blood pressure, you may need to take it long term.

Research shows the benefits of controlling high blood pressure Preventing and controlling high blood pressure is important for your heart health and may benefit your brain health as well. An NIH-funded study called the Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial (SPRINT) found that lowering systolic blood pressure to less than 120 in adults age 50 and older significantly reduced the risk of cardiovascular disease and death. Results from a related study showed that lowering systolic blood pressure to less than 120 reduced the risk of mild cognitive impairment, and an analysis of several large, long-term studies of adults over age 55 found that treating high blood pressure was associated with a reduction in the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Roy B. Culler, Jr. Senior Center Highlights National Volunteer Week, April 16 - 22

National Volunteer Week was officially established in 1974 but gained recognition after President George H.W. Bush's inaugural address in January 1990, when he recognized 1,000 volunteers from across the United States, referring to them as "a thousand points of light" and the most tangible example of neighbors helping neighbors. By May that same year, the national non-profit Points of Light Foundation was established and in January 1991, POLF merged with the National Volunteer Center. The nation's annual celebration of volunteers during the third week of April began to grow exponentially from that time forward.

High Point Parks & Recreation benefits from the time and talents of many community volunteers throughout the year, including over 70 volunteers who donate approximately 3,200 hours of their time at the Roy B. Culler, Jr. Senior Center each year. Most serve as class instructors (primarily in music, exercise and health and wellness programs) and Senior Games volunteers. They also assist with large mailings and other projects. We say "thank you" to each and every one!



One of those class instructors brought a new music program to the Culler Senior Center this year. Karen Smith-Gratto teaches an instrument called the mountain dulcimer. She learned to play in 2013, shortly before retiring from North Carolina A&T State University in 2015. Since that time, Karen has learned to build her own instruments and joined the First National Dulcimer Orchestra. She "jams" regularly with various groups and enjoys sharing the joy of playing the dulcimer with others.

"Karen has been a delight to work with," says Christie Hyman-Shine, Recreation Center Supervisor at the Culler Senior Center. "Karen approached us last spring, volunteering to teach our senior adults how to play the mountain dulcimer. She brings so much enthusiasm to her craft; she has brought new people to our center that may not have otherwise come in. But they do come, just to play the mountain dulcimer!"



We'd also would like to introduce you to Walter Hayes, retired hospital lab administrative director and former private pilot.

Walter has volunteered at the Roy B. Culler, Jr. Senior Center on Monday mornings since 2014, offering blood pressure checks to older adults. After retiring, he wanted to make good use of his time and with his background in the medical field, he felt a particular need to help provide a service to keep seniors more aware of their health.

Walter always says it's very important for older adults to know their blood pressure category (normal, elevated, high blood pressure or hypertensive crisis), along with their systolic (upper number) and diastolic (lower number) numbers, to help them self-monitor for potential heart disease and stroke.

For more information on services, programs and events provided by the Culler Senior Center, including Walter's weekly blood pressure checks, please stop by the Senior Center, call 336.883.3584 or visit www.highpointnc.gov/seniorcenter

Programs

Unless otherwise noted, please register in advance for all programs and events at www.highpointnc.gov/pr, or contact the Senior Center at 336.883.3584.

Beginners Ballet for Seniors

Tuesdays, 9 - 10 a.m.

July 11 - August 1, August 8 - 29, September 5 - 26

Ballet is an excellent way to practice balance and improve fitness! The class will incorporate beginner ballet steps and poses along with simple, fun dance combinations to help with posture, strength and flexibility. Chairs may be used for stability if needed; participants should dress in comfortable clothing and bring a water bottle. Fee: \$30 per month

Pickleball for
Beginners

- 4 p.m.

1 - September 5

Tuesdays, 2:30

August

Learn a new sport or sharpen your skill! Pickleball is easy for beginners to learn but can develop into a fast paced and competitive game for experienced players. Participants need to have good balance and agility and be able to move quickly on the court. Limited space is available; to register, please contact the Senior Center at 336.883.3584. Fee: \$5.

Yoga

Mondays & Thursdays, 11 a.m. - noon

July, August, September

Yoga helps with breathing, physical exercise and posture, along with meditation to integrate your mind. Yoga induces relaxation and stimulates the circulatory system to keep muscles and joints strong and flexible. It can also help reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering blood pressure and is useful in pain management. Fee: \$38 per month

Groovy Feet Chair Dance

Tuesdays, 10 - 10:45 a.m.

April 4 - 25, May 1 - 30, June 6 - 27

Move and groove along with Savanna, HealthTeam Advantage's wellness coordinator, to familiar music you know and love from different genres, decades and cultures! No dancing experience is required; just grab a chair and your favorite comfy dancing shoes. Registration is required due to limited space. Free.

Music Therapy

Thursday, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

August 31

Led by Magnolia Melodies and sponsored by HealthTeam Advantage, this program helps improve and maintain well-being by creating a safe space for self-expression, communication and socialization through the power of music. Registration is required. Free.

Active Living Every Day

Tuesdays, 2 - 3 p.m.

September 19 - December 5

A certified instructor will lead you through this program, focused on ways to be active every day: at work, at home, even on vacation. We will learn and practice behavior change skills such as goal setting, self-monitoring and social support.

Presentations

Unless otherwise noted, please register in advance for all programs and events at www.highpointnc.gov/pr or contact the Senior Center at 336.883.3584.

Lunch & Learn: Fraud Prevention and Detection

Wednesday, 11 a.m.- noon

July 19

This presentation on fraud prevention will outline the definition of fraud, who commit fraud, common types of fraud and how to detect as well as the step stop consider if you think you are a victim of fraud. Please note that participants must complete the session to receive lunch. Pre-registration is required, and the courtesy of advance notice of cancellation is kindly requested. this will be led by Oak Street Health, a partner of the Senior Center

Lunch & Learn: Is it Dementia or Normal Aging?

Wednesday, 11 a.m. - noon

August 2

Is it dementia or normal aging? We all experience forgetfulness, but when should we worry? This interactive session, presented by PACE of the Triad, will discuss normal aging, signs of dementia and possible next steps for you or a loved one.

Lunch & Learn: Quick Tips to Prevent Falls

Wednesday, 11 a.m. - noon

September 27 Falls are the leading cause of injury for older adults. During this session, sponsored by PACE of the Triad, participants will learn practical tips and simple changes to diet, exercise and home to help avoid falls and reduce injuries.

In-Person Education: Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body Series:

Tuesdays, 11 - 11:45 a.m.

July 18: Parkinson's prevention and care through activity and exercise

August 15: Help with bladder control through exercise

September 19: Alzheimer's prevention and care with activity and nutrition

Special thanks to Healthteam Advantage for sponsoring these three informative, in-person educational sessions on healthy living for your brain and body! Please note that pre-registration is required and the courtesy of advance notice of cancellation is kindly requested.

Medicare 101

Tuesday, 11 a.m. - noon

September 26

Are you interested in learning more about Medicare coverage and plans? This session, sponsored by Aetna, will cover a basic overview of Social Security and its benefits, as well as how Social Security and Medicare work together. We will discuss Medicare Parts A-D, what they cover, what options may be available and how to enroll.

Special Events

Unless otherwise noted, please register in advance for all programs and events at www.highpointnc.gov/pr or contact the Senior Center at 336.883.3584.

Veterans Summer Cookout

Tuesday, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

September 12

All Senior Veterans, please join us for our first Veterans Summer Cookout, for fellowship along with fun, food and games. Veterans may bring one guest. Sponsored by AuthoraCare and HealthTeam Advantage. Registration is respectively requested. Please contact the Senior Center at 336.883.3584.

Games & Giveaways

Name That Tune

60s Edition - Tuesday, August 8 11 a.m. - noon

exercise your brain as we play 50s & 60s musical "blasts from the past" in our version of the game show Name that Tune, sponsored by Aetna.

50s Edition - Tuesday, July 11

Challenge your memory and

Shoe Locker Giveaway

July 28

sizes will be given to senior adults free of charge at this event while they last! One pair per person, first come first served. Special thanks to Welfare Reform Liaison Project for the donation of the sneakers.

Friday, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Men's and women's sneakers of various

Senior Center Month

featuring "Mood Swingz," Live Entertainment

Friday, 1 - 3 p.m.

We are celebrating this year's National Senior Center Month with a variety of fun, games and crafts at our Senior Center Play Day! Visit the Culler Senior Center, see all it has to offer and experience our commitment to healthy aging and recreation through social engagement, continuing education, wellness and creativity. Please register in advance by coming by or calling the Senior Center. Bring a friend or two! Music and crafts sponsored by HealthTeam Advantage

Senior Play Day:

September 22

Services for seniors and their families

Senior Resources of Guilford: This organization provides services for older adults in High Point and Guilford County. Talk with staff by phone or call for an appointment at 336.883.3586.

SeniorLine Information and Referral: May we help you with information on housing, transportation options, caregiver assistance, food/meal assistance, home repair, counseling, falls prevention, a speaker for your organization or other senior adult needs? Please call 336.884.6981. SeniorLine is operated by Senior Resources of Guilford.

Blood Pressure Check: Check your numbers on Mondays at the Roy B. Culler, Jr. Senior Center from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP): Counselors and volunteers are available to counsel Medicare beneficiaries about their options. For an appointment, please call 336.373.4816, ext. 253. or 336.701.5810.

Legal Aid Mondays: Services are offered by appointment; please call 877.579.7562.

Transportation Guilford County: Free services are offered to senior adults; please call 336.641.4848 or contact HI Transit ACCESS (Dial-a-Lift) at 336.887.1183.

North Carolina Department of Social Services: To report abuse or neglect, please contact the Social Services Hotline available 24 hours a day at 800.378.5315.