

### Select these foods more frequently:

- Cereals, hot (those without added sodium)
- Cereals, lower sodium, ready to eat
- Couscous
- Fish and shellfish, fresh or frozen (not breaded)
- Lemon juice
- Lime juice
- Vinegar
- Fruits, fresh or frozen
- Meat, lean cuts
- Milk, nonfat, low-fat (1%), or evaporated skim
- Noodles, plain
- Poultry, skinless
- Rice, plain
- Quinoa and other grains
- Soups, broth, and bouillon, reduced or low sodium
- Spices and herbs, salt free:
  - Basil
  - Cilantro
  - Cumin
  - Garlic powder
  - Mint
  - Onion powder
  - Oregano
  - Pepper
  - Sage
  - Thyme
- Vegetable oils
- Vegetables, fresh, frozen (no sauce), or no-added-salt canned

### Contact information

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#### Dietician

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This brochure provides you with general information about Hypertension and what foods are best to eat or to reduce the risks and foods for if you have been diagnosed with hypertension.

If you have any questions after reading this brochure, you can contact your medical caregiver.

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# Hypertension

## *A Little Dash Will Do*



**SAFETY**  
**HEALTH**  
**SATISFACTION**

*The pillars defining our quality care*

*We Care Together!*



St. Maarten Medical Center

## What is blood pressure?

Your blood pressure is the force that is the result of your blood pushing against your arteries as your blood is circulated throughout your body.

*There are two numbers given when you get your blood pressure is checked.*

**The first (or top)** number is your systolic blood pressure. This is the pressure that occurs when your heart pumps blood to your body.

**The second (or bottom)** number is your diastolic blood pressure. This is the pressure that occurs when your heart fills back up with blood.

The table below shows what a normal blood pressure should be, and what is high blood pressure or hypertension.

### Understanding Blood Pressure

Category	Systolic		Diastolic
Normal	< 120	and	< 80
Prehypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure/Hypertension			
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	or	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥ 160	or	≥ 100

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## What are the dangers of high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer.” You can have high blood pressure and still feel fine, but it is important to get your numbers under control. If uncontrolled, high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart disease, heart attack, vision loss, and kidney problems.

## How can I improve my blood pressure?

Certain factors can cause someone to have high blood pressure. These include genetics, gender, age, and race.

There are many lifestyle changes you can make to improve your high blood pressure or reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure.

Exercise for at least 30 minutes, 3-4 days each week. Eat a well-balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Watch your sodium (salt) intake. Foods high in sodium include canned goods such as soups and tomato sauces, deli meats, cheese, and condiments.

Get at least eight hours of sleep each night. If you smoke, cut back or quit altogether. Limit alcoholic drinks to two per day for men and one per day for women.

## What do I need to be looking for on food labels and what does it mean?

**Sodium free** is considered 5 mg or less

**Low sodium** is considered 35 mg or less

**Moderately low sodium** is considered 140 mg or less

**Reduced sodium** Much less than the regular item but more than 140 mg per serving



## Here are tips to cut major sources of salt from your diet:

- Use fresh foods.
- Use frozen foods that are plain and nothing added.
- Use canned goods that are “with no added salt”.
- Use fresh chicken, fish, and lean meat. Avoid canned or processed meats.
- Use herbs spices, and salt-free seasoning blends when cooking and at the table.
- Cook rice, pasta, and hot cereal without salt.
- Cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes.
- Choose “convenience” foods that are low in sodium.
- Cut back on frozen dinners, pizza, packaged foods, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings.
- Rinse canned foods, such as tuna, to remove some sodium.
- Look for low-sodium, reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added foods.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals that are low in sodium.