

## Be a 'Patient' Patient

**Treating high blood pressure is a marathon, not a sprint.  
Your treatment may take time to work. Stick with it.**

Did you know that many people taking medication for high blood pressure have not yet controlled their high blood pressure?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 7 million Americans taking medication for high blood pressure have not yet lowered their blood pressure to the level recommended by their doctor.

Common challenges with medication may be side effects, costs, or a belief that the drug isn't working.

The number of patients who have not yet controlled their high blood pressure highlights the importance of sticking with your doctor's instructions.

Earlier editions of "In the Know" discussed the first and second steps for controlling blood pressure: knowing your blood pressure and talking to your doctor. This edition will focus on step three: sticking with it.

Lowering high blood pressure takes time; it may even feel like running a marathon.

Your doctor will help you see the finish line by recommending a heart healthy diet, exercising, and taking the right medicine.

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### Go the Distance »

Stick with your treatment.



# A Dose of Information

### Answers to common questions about blood pressure medicine.

#### How do I know if my high blood pressure medicine is working?

Most blood pressure medication takes time to work.

It may take two to four weeks for you to see a steady decrease in your blood pressure.

If your blood pressure has not changed since starting a new medication or if your blood pressure is going up instead of staying within the blood pressure goal set by your doctor, contact your doctor to see if he or she needs to change your treatment plan.

#### Does it make a difference if I stop and start my blood pressure medication on my own?

It definitely does! Even when you forget your medication for one day, your blood pressure can increase outside your blood pressure goal and increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke.



**Like Clockwork** » Even when you forget your medication for one day, your blood pressure can increase outside your blood pressure goal.

You should always take your medication everyday as instructed by your doctor.

If you forget your dose, ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do.

And, you should always talk to your doctor before you decide to stop taking your medication.

#### What are some common side effects I might experience?

While most blood pressure medicines are well tolerated some side effects may occur. Common side effects from blood pressure medications may include:

- » Dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting when standing or sitting up.
- » Feeling tired, fatigued or dizzy.
- » Headaches.
- » Low blood pressure.
- » Persistent dry and non-productive cough.
- » Swelling.

If you experience these or any other side effects, talk with your doctor or pharmacist right away.



## An Easy Way to Save

**Look for generic alternatives to keep your medication costs down.**

Fortunately, many blood pressure medications are now available in generic forms that are much more affordable. Research shows that many inexpensive drugs for high blood pressure work as well or better than newer, expensive drugs.

Examples of common drugs used to treat blood pressure fall into the five classes (lower case = generic, UPPER CASE = BRAND NAME):

- » Diuretics or “water pills.” Examples: hydrochlorothiazide, hctz, furosemide, chlorthalidone.
- » Beta Blockers. Examples: atenolol, metoprolol,



You and your qualified spouse can earn the \$50 Healthy Utah First Steps rebate just by participating in a testing session and completing an online health questionnaire. A \$50 Blood Pressure Improvement Rebate is also available. For more information visit [www.healthyutah.org](http://www.healthyutah.org). Check with your employer to see if they participates.

- propranolol, carvedilol, bisoprolol.
- » Calcium Channel Blockers. Examples: amlodipine, felodipine, nifedipine,

nisoldipine.

- » Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors or “ACE inhibitors”. Examples: lisinopril, fosinopril, benazepril, captopril, enalapril, perindopril, trandolapril.
- » Angiotensin Receptor Blocker or “ARB”. Examples: losartan, MICARDIS, BENICAR.

Your PEHP Pharmacy benefit covers many generic and brand name medications — including all those listed above. For specific information, go to [www.pehp.org](http://www.pehp.org).

## Tips for taking your medicine as instructed

Remember, the medicine your doctor prescribed won't work if you're not taking it.

Here are some tips to make filling your next prescription a little easier:

- » **Ask your pharmacy for “refill reminders.”** Many pharmacies offer a reminder service to help remember

refills; some even fill your prescription automatically when the next refill is due. Ask your pharmacist about what services are available.

- » **Use the same pharmacy for all your medication.** The pharmacists at the pharmacy will help remember your refills, answer medication

questions, and help avoid dangerous drug interactions.

- » **Taking medication is about forming a habit.** It won't happen in a day or a week. Stick with it for a few days and then a few weeks and you may have developed a reliable habit for sticking with your medication.

## Test Your Blood Pressure IQ

**1. My blood pressure has gone up after my doctor gave me a new medication. What should I do?**

- a. Take an extra dose of medication
- b. Call your doctor to report what has happened and ask for instructions
- c. Stop taking the medication
- d. Stop taking your blood pressure

**2. Many inexpensive medications for high blood pressure work as well as newer, expensive ones.**

- a. True
- b. False

**3. Three important steps to treating high blood pressure are:**

- a. Know your blood pressure
- b. Talk to your doctor about lowering high blood pressure
- c. Stick with the instructions from your doctor
- d. All of the above

**4. What should you do if you experience side effects from your medication?**

- a. Stop taking the medicine; it wasn't helping anyway
- b. Keep taking the medicine; it was expensive and shouldn't be wasted

**c. Call your doctor to report what has happened and ask for instructions**

**5. Which of the following is the most desirable blood pressure reading?**

- a. 160/100
- b. 140/90
- c. 130/80
- d. Lower than 120/80

*(Find the answers at the bottom left of this page.)*

### Baked Pork Chops

### Spice things up with this low-calorie pork chop

- 1 egg white
- 1 cup evaporated skim milk
- ¾ cup cornflake crumbs
- ¼ cup fine dry bread crumbs
- 4 teaspoon paprika
- 2 teaspoon oregano
- ¾ teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt

#### Cooking Instructions

- 1. Preheat oven to 375° F
- 2. Trim fat from pork chops

3. Beat egg white with evaporated skim milk. Place chops in milk mixture and let stand for 5 minutes, turning once.

4. While chops are standing, mix cornflake crumbs, bread crumbs, and spices.

5. Lightly coat a 13 by 9 inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray.

6. Remove chops from milk mixture and coat with crumb mixture.

7. Place chops in pan and bake at 375° F for 20 minutes. Turn chops and bake for an additional 15 minutes or until no pink remains.

#### Nutritional Analysis

**Serving Size »** 1 pork chop

**Calories »** 216

**Total fat »** 8 grams

**Saturated fat »** 3 grams

**Cholesterol »** 62 grams

**Sodium »** 346mg

**Total fiber »** 1 gram

**Protein »** 25 grams

**Carbohydrate »** 10 grams

**Potassium »** 414mg