



# POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Health and Wellness Information for Members

Fall 2013



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## High Blood Pressure-Control is the Goal



Blood pressure measures the force of your blood as it moves through your veins. High blood pressure is when your blood pressure remains raised over time. It is also called hypertension. Many people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) have high blood pressure. People like you at Positive Healthcare told us that more than half (50%) had this problem. Many people have high blood pressure and do not know they have it.

- Do you know if you have high blood pressure?
- What do you think raises your blood pressure?
- Do you know what to do to keep it under control?

High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because there are very few symptoms. It makes the chance of heart attack or stroke much more likely. If you have high blood pressure, **take your meds each day** as your doctor prescribes, even if you feel fine.

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## What Do My Numbers Tell Me?

Your blood pressure numbers give you the force of your blood against the walls of your heart. There are two numbers. The top number shows the force as your heart beats (systolic). The bottom number shows the force as your heart rests (diastolic).

**The goal for a normal blood pressure is 120/80**



P.O. Box 46160  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Member Services  
Mon - Fri, 8:00am to 8:00pm  
Tel (800) 263-0067  
TTY/TDD: 711

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## How is Blood Pressure Controlled?

You can prevent and control high blood pressure when you follow some simple steps for healthy living. You can avoid many common health problems when you use these health tips part of your normal routine:



- **Eat a balanced diet.** Avoid fatty foods. Choose whole grains, fresh fruits and veggies. Go for lean protein like skinless chicken, fish and nuts.
- **Stay active.** Try to exercise at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. You can walk, run, swim, work in your garden, do yoga, dance, or anything you find fun to do.
- **Avoid salty foods.** Taste your food to see if it needs salt. Pre-packaged and frozen foods will have more salt than food you make from scratch.
- **Keep a healthy weight.** Extra weight makes your heart work harder to get blood where it needs to go. Ask your doctor what is healthy for you.
- **Do not use tobacco.** When you smoke or use tobacco, you put yourself at risk of heart disease, cancer and many other health problems. If you would like to stop smoking or using tobacco, call our free program *Quit for Life* at 1-855-252-4871.
- **Limit alcohol.** It is better to not drink at all. But if you do drink, it should be consumed in moderation—up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. Men over 65 and women should limit to 1 drink a day. One drink is defined as 12 fluid ounces of regular beer (5% alcohol), 5 fluid ounces of wine (12% alcohol), or 1.5 fluid ounces of 80 proof (40% alcohol) distilled spirits.

## Tips to Check your Blood Pressure at Home

One good way to control high blood pressure is to track it over time. Ask your doctor to prescribe a **blood pressure monitor** for you to keep track at home. Positive Healthcare covers the cost of the monitor. This machine lets you take your own blood pressure in the comfort of your own home. Here are some helpful hints to help make sure the blood pressure readings you get at home are as true and precise as those from your doctor:

### Before you begin

- Do not smoke, drink caffeine, or eat a big meal 30 minutes before you plan to take your blood pressure
- Wear loose clothing that is easy to roll up above the elbow
- Rest for 5 minutes before you start
- Sit in a chair with your arm at the same level as your heart

### When you take the reading

- Always use the same arm in the cuff. The cuff is the part that fits around your arm
- Put both feet flat on the ground
- Relax and take deep breaths
- Keep still and quiet. The reading can rise if you move or talk.
- Take two or more readings, at least two minutes apart.

### After you finish

- Write down the numbers of each reading you take in a book or journal with the date and time you checked your blood pressure
- Bring the numbers with you on your next doctor visit

Try to check your blood pressure at home at different times in the day. See if it tends to be higher or lower in the morning, midday or evening. Bring your blood pressure monitor with you to your doctor visit to make sure the reading matches the one in the office.

## The Value of A Good Night's Sleep

Have you ever woken up after a good night's sleep and felt like a whole new person? Good sleep can refresh us and improve our outlook on life. It is a chance for our bodies and minds to process our day and prepare for the next.

Insomnia is a term to describe problems with your sleep patterns. Most people have trouble with sleep at certain points in their life. It can be hard to fall asleep or stay asleep. You may wake up very early in the morning or wake up and not feel rested. This can have a big impact on your health and well-being.



### How Can You Improve Sleep?

Some people with insomnia say it feels like they just cannot shut their minds down. Sleep problems often come up when you are stressed, anxious or depressed. Your sleep should return to normal when you address these other issues. Talk to your doctor if you have trouble sleeping or feel depressed.

There are many ways to get the rest your body needs without any kind of medication. You can get a good night's sleep when you follow these healthy sleep habits:

- **Have a set routine.** Go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning. Set an alarm to wake you up.
- **Create a good sleep space.** Try to make your bedroom dark and quiet. If you can, use your bedroom only for sleep. Avoid TV and other things that can distract you in your sleep space.
- **Prepare for sleep.** Late night snacks or exercise can keep you up. Set aside at least an hour before you turn in to relax your body and mind.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Your sleep can be fitful when you drink too much. You may wake up during the night and feel groggy in the morning.
- **Relax your mind.** Focus on your breath and try to relax one part of your body at a time. This will calm your mind as well.
- **Keep a journal.** Write down when you wake at night and why. Describe your dreams while they are fresh in your mind. This can help reveal the cause of troubled sleep.

Sedatives are medications that slow down your body and mind. Long-term use of these meds is not always safe. It is easy to use them the wrong way. Many are hard to quit after you no longer need them. Talk to your doctor before you use any over-the-counter sleep aids.

## Have You Made Your *Five Wishes*?

It is not easy to think about what will happen at the end of your life. The topic of death and dying is hard to face and harder to talk about with your loved ones. It helps when you have taken the time to make a plan.

*Five Wishes* is an advance directive or living will. It is a form that lets your loved ones know your health care choices if you are too sick to make them yourself. They will know just what types of treatment you want and how you wish to be cared for.

### How Can *Five Wishes* Help You?

When you fill out the *Five Wishes* form, you can:

- Talk with your family, friends and doctor about what you would like to happen if you get very sick or have a bad accident
- Let them know your wishes so they do not have to make hard choices without you
- Make sure your needs are met if you get very sick

### How Can You Make Your *Five Wishes*?

Talk with your doctor or RN Care Team Manager. They can:

- Give you a *Five Wishes* form
- Help you to fill out the form
- Put it in your medical record in case you need it
- Help you to update it if you change your mind



Over 8 million people have made their *Five Wishes*. The form is easy to fill out and comes in many languages. Ask your doctor or RN Care Team Manager for your own *Five Wishes*.



## Be Stress Free!

Life can be full of pressures. Sometimes it can be hard to juggle all of life's demands. Your health, job, family, friends, or money issues can put pressure on you. These things can all make you feel very stressed out.

Too much stress can make you moody or angry. You might feel tired or run-down. Stress over time can weaken your immune system and lower your CD4 count. It can be harmful to things like your heart, your stomach and your brain.

### How Can You Beat Stress?

There are many ways to manage stress in healthy ways. When you feel stress start to build, you can find ways to keep it from taking over.

- Take a few deep breaths. This helps when you feel stress in the moment. It gives your blood oxygen and will relax you
- Move your body! Walk, dance, swim, do yoga or go to a gym.
- Don't sweat the small stuff.
- Let go of things that are not under your control. Change things that are.
- Make a point to laugh at least once a day.
- Keep a journal. When something is on your mind, it helps to see it written down on paper.
- Connect with a friend. Being with people you enjoy helps you cope with stress.
- Find a support group, church, synagogue or other community group.
- Make an effort to help or support someone else in need. This can let you focus on something besides the source of your stress.

### Make a Move to a Healthy You

Most people cannot avoid stress. You might not be able to control how many stressful things are in your life. **You can change** how you think about it and act on it. Don't let stress get you down. You have the power to turn it around!

More from the Body:

[www.thebody.com/content/art32279.html](http://www.thebody.com/content/art32279.html)



## Access to Care

Positive Healthcare wants you to get the care you need. There are set amounts of time to get the care you need. Positive Healthcare and doctors must follow these standards. If you can, call your doctor or the Nurse Advice Line before you go to the hospital.

If you have questions, call Member Services: (800) 263-0067

If you need help after hours, call the Nurse Advice Line: (800) 797-1717

Type of Care	PHC Appointment Standards
1. Emergency	Go to the ER right away
2. Urgent Care	In 24 hours
3. Primary Care	In one week
4. Specialist	In three weeks
5. Mental Health	In two weeks
6. Other services to test for or treat an illness	In three weeks



## Your RN Care Team Manager

Good health and healthcare come from teamwork. Positive Healthcare works with your doctor, pharmacist, social worker and others in your Health Home to make sure you get the best care for you when you need it. You are at the center of this team. Your strongest partner is your RN Care Team Manager (RNCTM).

You can think of your nurse care manager as your own personal nurse. They help manage your care with the others on your healthcare team. Your RNCTM is there for you in a number of different ways.

- **If you feel sick.** Your RNCTM can answer questions about symptoms and tell you what to do. They can tell you if you should go to the hospital.
- **Complex care.** Most people have more than one doctor. There are doctors for your heart, your bones, your skin and more. Your RNCTM helps manage all the special doctors you need to visit.
- **Health coach.** As a health coach, your nurse care manager can help you adopt and keep healthy habits. They can explain your labs to you, suggest ways to take your meds the right way and how to live well with HIV.
- **Advocate.** An advocate is someone who sticks up for you. Your RNCTM will protect your rights as a Positive Healthcare Member and make sure you are informed about every part of your care. If you have any concerns about your care, call your RNCTM.

Keep in touch with your RN Care Team Manager. They are here for you!

### Call Toll-Free

Mon-Fri, 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM

**(800) 474-1434**

### After-Hours Nurse Advice Line

Mon-Fri 5:30 PM- 8:30 AM and 24 hours on weekends

**(800) 797-1717**

## Think About Joining a Trial!

New drug trials and treatment studies start all the time. These help create better treatment for all people living with HIV/AIDS. There are many types of clinical trials. One may be perfect for you. Your doctor may ask you to join a trial. Think about it!

For more info call:  
California: (323) 913-1033

## Fight the Flu

The flu season starts in the fall and ends in the spring. More people get sick at this time of year. When you have HIV, the flu might make you sicker than other people. If your CD4 (T-Cell) count is low, the flu virus can make you sick for a longer time. The flu can cause pneumonia or death. The good news is that you can protect yourself from the flu.

### Get a Flu Shot Every Year!

- This year the shot protects against different types of flu virus than last year
- Do not get the nasal spray vaccine. This is also called FluMist. It is not safe for people with HIV.

### Prevent the Spread of Germs

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm
- Wash your hands often. Use soap and warm water for 20-30 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers if there is no soap
- Do not touch your face. Flu germs spread when you touch your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Stay away from people who are sick with the flu
- Stay home when you are sick. Wait until at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

### Take These Steps if you Get Sick

If you think you have the flu, you should see your doctor right away. They may be able to give you meds to help stop the flu from getting worse.

These are some common signs of the flu:

- Headache or body aches
- Chills
- Feel very tired
- Cough or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Fever

Diarrhea and vomiting are rare but can be signs of the flu.

**Protect yourself during flu season. Get a flu shot this fall!**



## Prevention Points

**Prevention is key to a healthy life. Be sure to:**

- ✓ Stay in touch with your doctor, nurse care manager and social worker
- ✓ Get labs to check your viral load and CD4 count often
- ✓ Take your HIV medications as prescribed
- ✓ Talk to your doctor about an Advance Directive (Five Wishes Guide)
- ✓ Get a glaucoma test for your eyes
- ✓ Talk to your doctor about tests to check for colon, prostate and rectal cancer
- ✓ Get an anal pap test each year
- ✓ Get a pap test of the cervix (women only)
- ✓ Ask for routine STD screening
- ✓ Work out 30 to 60 minutes, 5 days a week
- ✓ Eat 5 to 9 servings of fruits and veggies daily
- ✓ Practice safer sex
- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Limit alcohol use
- ✓ Stop illegal drug use
- ✓ See friends and be social for mental health and well-being



## Special Needs

We know many of our members have special needs that make it hard to communicate with their healthcare team or Health Plan. Tell the doctor, nurse care manager or other member of your health home team if English is the not language you speak. We can call an interpreter who speaks your language. If you are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have other special needs, we can arrange a service to help us communicate with you. For your health, it is vital that you and your doctor or healthcare team understand each other. These services are free to you.



## *A Message from Your Health Plan*

### **Your Contact Information**

Positive Healthcare Partners cares about you and your health. We need to know if you moved or got a new phone number in the past year. Please call Member Services to update your record.

### **Member Services**

Monday-Friday 8:00am-8:00pm  
(800) 263-0067 TTY/TTD: 711

### **Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP)**

As part of Positive Healthcare California, you are enrolled in the MTMP. This Program helps people who take many prescribed meds. The Program lowers the chance of mistakes and reactions with your meds.

Your health care team will be in touch with you and your doctor. They will explain the drugs that you take. Your doctor will know of safety issues with your meds. Any other health issues will also be handled. Your RNCTM will contact you to make an action plan for your meds. An action plan with your nurse care manager will help with any problems you may have. The action plan will let you know just how and when to take your meds.

### **Compliance Hotline**

Help us look out for Medi-Cal fraud and abuse. For example, if your Explanation of Benefits lists charges that are wrong, call Member Services. Call our Compliance Hotline if you suspect possible fraud or abuse.

**Compliance Hotline:** (800) AIDS-HIV • (800) 243-7448

## *We want to hear from you!*

**The Client Advisory Committee is a great way to tell us what you think about your Health Plan! We welcome all Positive Healthcare members and AHF Healthcare Center clients. You can share your questions, concerns and comments with our Health Plan leaders. We use your concerns to make your Plan better. Come to the next meeting to find out what Positive Healthcare can do for you!**

### **California - Los Angeles**

Tues, Nov 26, 2013

6255 W. Sunset Blvd, 21st Floor

To RSVP, **call Santiago at (800) 243-2101**

***Food and drinks will be served.***

## *Questions?*

### **Contact Your RN Care Team Manager**

Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:30pm

Tel: (800) 474-1434

### **Urgent After-Hours Nurse Advice Line**

Mon-Fri, 5:30pm-8:30am and 24 hours on Weekends

Tel: (800) 797-1717