

In Sound Health

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THE SILENT THREAT: UNRAVELING THE EFFECTS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Healthcare providers often refer to high blood pressure as the “silent killer” for a reason — it usually manifests without symptoms, silently causing damage within the body. Also known as hypertension, high blood pressure affects millions of people globally. Understanding the impact of this condition on the body and what steps you can take can help lower your risk.

The Basics

High blood pressure occurs when the force of blood against the artery walls is consistently too high, making the heart work harder to pump blood. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg), and a reading of 130/80 mm Hg or higher is indicative of hypertension.



Risk Factors

High blood pressure can arise from a variety of factors. Getting older puts you at a higher risk, especially past age 65, and certain ethnicities are more prone to hypertension. If high blood pressure runs in your family, you’re more likely to develop it too. Lifestyle habits are also important. Eating too much salt, not moving enough, and smoking can all push your blood pressure up. Additionally, conditions like kidney disease, diabetes, and sleep apnea can make high blood pressure worse.

Complications of Uncontrolled High Blood Pressure

Most people with hypertension do not experience noticeable symptoms, even when blood pressure readings are dangerously high. However, this silent progression can lead to severe complications over time, including:

Heart Disease: Hypertension increases the risk of heart attacks, coronary artery disease, and heart failure.

Stroke: Elevated blood pressure can lead to the weakening of blood vessels, increasing the likelihood of strokes.

Kidney Damage: The blood vessels in the kidneys may become narrow or weak, leading to impaired kidney function.

Vision Issues: Hypertension can cause thickening, narrowing, or tearing of blood vessels in the eyes, resulting in vision problems.

SPRING INTO HEALTH: EMBRACING CHANGE AND WELLNESS

March 2024

The arrival of spring is a perfect time to shake off old habits and embrace a fresh perspective on health and wellness. Take advantage of the season and continue your journey towards better health by focusing on habits that support your overall well-being.

In this issue of *In Sound Health* we explore the effects of high blood pressure and the steps you can take to prevent and manage it. We also share simple exercises to improve your joint mobility, helping you stay safe at work and feel your best in all areas of your life. Plus, learn about the benefits of eating a varied and balanced diet to ensure you get the vitamins and minerals you need. Don’t miss out on a colorful spring salad recipe, and remember, if you’re looking to improve your health, Sound Support programs are always available to support you.



Prevention and Management

Preventing and managing high blood pressure involves lifestyle modifications and regular monitoring. Here are some steps you can take to lower your risk of high blood pressure:



Eat Heart-Healthy

Adopt a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy while minimizing salt intake.



Get Moving

Engage in regular exercise to maintain a healthy weight and promote overall cardiovascular health.



Limit Alcohol and Tobacco

Reduce alcohol consumption, quit smoking, and avoid secondhand smoke.



Manage Stress

Incorporate stress-management techniques, such as mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation exercises to alleviate mental and emotional strain.

Source: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)



Stay on top of high blood pressure and avoid a higher deductible in 2025. When you measure your blood pressure as part of an annual biometric screening you can earn up to \$100 in HRA funding.

BRIGHTER SMILES, BETTER HEALTH

Most people know the importance of brushing their teeth, flossing, and seeing the dentist. But oral health is more than just avoiding cavities — it's like a peek into our overall health. By taking care of your teeth and gums, you're not just preventing dental issues; you're also warding off serious diseases and keeping chronic conditions in check.

Here Are Three Reasons Oral Health is Important:

1. Preserve Teeth, Maintain Facial Structure

Prioritizing oral health helps prevent tooth loss, preserving your facial structure and promoting overall well-being.

2. Guard Against Disease

Oral health problems heighten the risk of diseases such as endocarditis and respiratory infections, impacting your overall health.

3. Prioritize Oral Health with Chronic Conditions

Managing oral health is critical for people with chronic conditions like diabetes, reducing the risk of complications and aiding in disease management.

Get to Know Your Dental Benefits

The timing of your eligibility for dental benefits will depend on both the medical plan you are on and how long you have been working. Call the Trust Office to confirm if you are eligible for dental benefits.

To learn more about your dental plan:

Visit www.soundhealthwellness.com → Browse the site for PPO or Kaiser and select the Benefits tab.



MOVE BETTER, WORK SAFER: A GUIDE TO JOINT MOBILITY

It might be hard to think about additional exercise after a long day of work on your feet, but certain exercise — like stretching and mobility training can bring many benefits. Developing and maintaining your joint mobility is vital for overall health — it supports flexibility, reduces injury risk, and improves physical performance. Plus, maintaining healthy joints can have positive effects on your well-being at work, allowing you to move more freely and comfortably throughout the day. Here's a guide to help you kickstart and sustain your journey towards better joint health.

5 Joint Mobility Exercises for Improved Flexibility

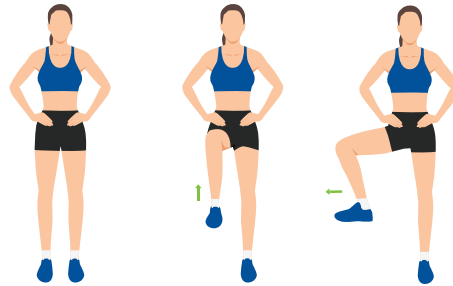
Try these simple joint mobility exercises to enhance your flexibility and movement, so you can feel your best at work and in all areas of your life. Begin slowly, working up to three times a week. If anything hurts, stop the exercise.

1 Ankle Mobility



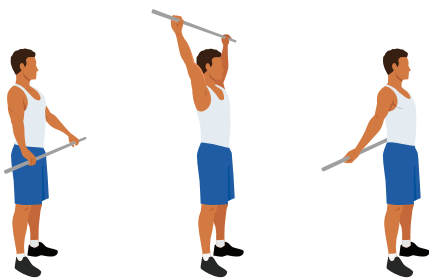
- Stand tall next to a wall for support.
- Rock forward onto your toes, then back onto your heels.
- Repeat 10 times for each ankle.

2 Walking Hip Openers



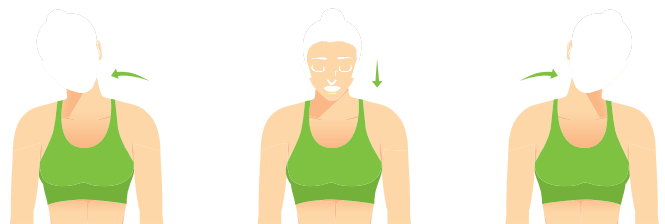
- Stand with feet hip-width apart.
- Lift your left knee to your chest, then make a circular motion with your knee.
- Repeat 10 times for each leg.

4 Shoulder Pass-Through



- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a broomstick parallel to the floor.
- Slowly raise the broomstick above your head and behind your head.
- Repeat 5 times.

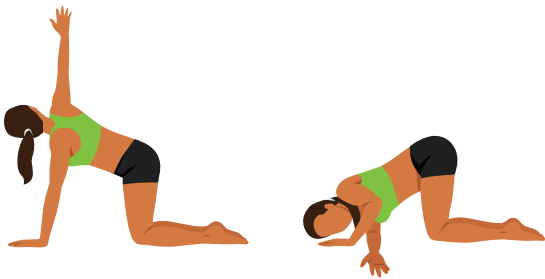
5 Neck Half Circles



- Sit comfortably with hands on your lap.
- Tilt your head to one side until you feel a stretch, then roll your head forward and to the other side.
- Make 3 half circles, moving slowly and smoothly.



3 Thread the Needle



- Start on your hands and knees, making sure your elbows, shoulders and wrists are in a straight line to the ground.
- Lift your right hand up, directing your gaze up with it.
- Bring your right hand down, threading it beneath your left arm onto the ground.
- Let your right shoulder rest on the ground and shift your right fingertips to the left until you feel a stretch. Hold the pose.
- Repeat on the other side.

Sources: [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com), [communitycare.com](https://www.communitycare.com)



EARN HRA FUNDING FOR GETTING ACTIVE

Looking for an easy way to get active outside of work? You can earn rewards and HRA funding (if eligible) with LiveWell Fit. Plus, bring an eligible Trust participant to their first event with you, and you'll both be entered to win a \$300 VISA gift card! With up to four event registration fees reimbursed by the Trust per year, it's a great way to get moving and improve your joint health.



BRIGHT SPRING SALAD

Celebrate the flavors of spring with this colorful salad. Packed with crisp vegetables, fragrant herbs, and a tangy vinaigrette, it offers a burst of freshness and flavor that's uncomplicated and delightful. **Serves: 4**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch asparagus, tender parts, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed
- A few handfuls of salad greens
- 2 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 avocado, pitted and diced
- 1/4 cup chopped, toasted pistachios
- 1/2 cup roasted chickpeas
- Fresh herbs, for garnish (basil, mint, and/or chives)
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

DRESSING

- 1/4 cup fresh basil or a mix of basil and mint
- 1 small garlic clove
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice, plus 1/2 teaspoon zest
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, more as desired
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt

PREPARATION

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and set a bowl of ice water nearby. Blanch the asparagus for about 1 minute, until tender but still bright green. Transfer to the ice water for 1 minute, then drain. Allow the asparagus to dry and transfer it back to the bowl and add the peas.
2. Make the dressing: In a food processor or blender, pulse together the herbs, garlic, lemon juice, zest, vinegar, olive oil, and salt.
3. Add half of the dressing to the bowl with the asparagus and toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Assemble the salad. Arrange the salad greens on a platter, then layer the asparagus/pea mixture, the radishes, feta, avocado, pistachios, chickpeas, and herbs. Drizzle with remaining dressing, season to taste with more salt and pepper, and serve.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Serving size: 1/4 of the salad

352 calories	16.2g fiber
18.6g fat	113g protein
41.1g carbs	

Source: modified from *Taste of Home* at [tasteofhome.com](https://www.tasteofhome.com)

WHOLE FOODS, WHOLE HEALTH: A NUTRITIONAL GUIDE

Vitamins and minerals are the unsung heroes of our bodies, keeping us healthy and protecting us against diseases. While supplements can be a convenient solution, they pale in comparison to the wealth of nutrients found in whole foods.

It can be overwhelming to think about how much of each vitamin and mineral you need every day, so instead of fixating on specific numbers, focus on making sure you have a varied and balanced diet. Most people can get all the nutrients needed from regular meals by prioritizing fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, low-fat protein, and dairy. If you have a known vitamin deficiency, special dietary constraints or medical condition, your healthcare provider may recommend supplements or a specific diet.

The Fiber Factor

Fiber plays a crucial role in digestion, cholesterol regulation, and weight management. Foods like brown rice, beans, lentils, nuts, and apples are rich sources of fiber, keeping you feeling full and satisfied.




Essential Vitamins and Minerals

Meet your nutritional needs by eating diverse foods, including:

- Lean beef, poultry, and fish for iron
- Spinach and other leafy greens, carrots, and sweet potatoes for vitamin A
- Fatty fish and fortified cereals and milk for B12 and vitamin D
- Whole grains like oats and barley for B vitamins
- Nuts and seeds for vitamin
- Dairy products like yogurt and cheese, salmon, and leafy greens for calcium

Supercharge with Phytochemicals

Phytochemicals, which come from plants, are only found in food, not supplements. Diets rich in phytochemicals are associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases, like cancer and heart disease. Try incorporating these foods into your diet:

-  Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries
-  Carrots, sweet potatoes, and turnips
-  Soybeans, edamame, and lentils

A few ideas to get you started

Consider incorporating these meal ideas into your daily diet:

- Start your day with a bowl of oatmeal topped with sliced strawberries and a handful of almonds for a dose of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
- Enjoy a colorful salad filled with spinach, carrots, bell peppers, chickpeas, and grilled chicken, dressed with a tangy vinaigrette for lunch (or try the Bright Spring Salad on page 5).
- Snack on carrot sticks with hummus or a small handful of mixed nuts and dried fruits in the afternoon to keep your energy levels up.
- Whip up a stir-fry with tofu or shrimp, broccoli, snap peas, and bell peppers served over brown rice for a satisfying dinner packed with vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals.



Sources: health.harvard.edu, stanfordhealthcare.org

IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO KNOW

PPO PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Trust Office—Benefits, Eligibility, HRA	(206) 282-4500 or (800) 225-7620
Delta Dental PPO & Schedule Plan	(800) 554-1907
DeltaCare	(800) 650-1583
VSP (Vision Service Plan)	(800) 877-7195
WellDyneRx —for Prescription Coverage	(888) 479-2000
MCC Nurses —for Hospitalization/Health Conditions	(877) 362-9969 Option 2
MCC Nurses —for Behavioral Health	(206) 308-5632
Nurse Line	(877) 362-9969 Option 1
Health Coaching	(877) 362-9969 Option 3
Quit Tobacco Coaching	(877) 362-9969 Option 4
LiveWell Fit	(800) 225-7620 Option 2, then 5

PRIVACY POLICY

Your health information is completely confidential, protected by federal law, and cannot be shared with your union or your employer without your permission.

All Trust programs are provided and managed by independent service providers contracted by the Trust. The information on your health status and conditions, your medical and prescription drug claims, and the information you may provide when participating is only used to offer you programs that could help you meet your health and wellness goals.

By law, your health information cannot be used to deny healthcare coverage.

KAISER PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Trust Office—Eligibility, HRA	(206) 282-4500 or (800) 225-7620
Kaiser Permanente—Benefits, Claims Status	(888) 901-4636
Delta Dental PPO & Schedule Plan	(800) 554-1907
DeltaCare	(800) 650-1583
WellDyneRx —for Prescription Coverage	(800) 373-1568
Consulting Nurse Helpline	(800) 297-6877
Quit for Life® Tobacco Cessation	(800) 462-5327
LiveWell Fit	(800) 225-7620 Option 2, then 5
Chronic Conditions Workshops	(800) 992-2279

GET CARE ANYWHERE!

The Trust offers multiple ways to access the care you need for yourself and your covered family members without going to the doctor's office. Whether it's by phone, chat, or video, you can get confidential medical care wherever it's most convenient for you. Take advantage of one of these unique services when you can't—or don't want to—leave the house.

Visit www.soundhealthwellness.com/virtualcare to learn more!





SOUND HEALTH
& WELLNESS TRUST

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**GET
INVOLVED**

This newsletter provides a general overview of plan benefits. Please refer to your Plan Booklet for specifics about covered expenses as well as exclusions and limitations. The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your healthcare providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

KICK OFF YOUR 5K GOALS

Sign up for one of the dozens of LiveWell Fit events happening this spring!

Have you ever dreamed of completing a 5k run or walk? Get a little extra motivation from the Trust! When you sign up for a LiveWell Fit approved 5k (or any other event) and complete the event, the Trust will reimburse you the cost of registration. You can also earn rewards and HRA funding (if eligible) for 2025. It's almost like getting paid to exercise!



Earn funds for your HRA with LiveWell Fit. See the full list for details.

DATE	EVENT NAME & DESCRIPTION
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MARCH

9	Issaquah	RUFA Tiger Mountain —8.3+ mile trail run/walk
9	Redmond	Lake Sammamish Half Marathon —13.1 mile run/walk
9	Seattle	Women's History Month 5k —3.1 mile run/walk
16	Woodinville	Woodinville Leprechaun Leap —6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk and kids sprint
16	Oak Harbor	Deception Pass Marathon and Half —26.2 or 13.1 mile run/walk and kids run
16	Tacoma	St. Paddy's Day Run Tacoma —13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
16	Kent	Run the Green —13.1 or 6.2 mile run
16	Bellingham	Runnin' O' the Green —4.97 or 3.1 mile run/walk
16	Lakewood	Ft. Steilacoom Resolution Run Series: 30k, 15k or 5k —18.6, 9.3 or 3.1 mile run/walk
16	Port Angeles	Frosty Moss Relay —80 or 30 mile relay and 31 mile solo trail run/walk
16	Gig Harbor	Shamrock'n the Harbor 5k & 12k —7.5 or 3.1 mile run/walk
16	Poulsbo	Poulsbo Beer Run —4 mile run/walk
16	Spokane	St. Patty's 5k —3.1 mile run/walk
16	Chelan	Chelan Shamrock Shuffle —3.1 mile run/walk
17	Seattle	St. Patrick's Day Dash —3.1 mile run/walk and kids dash
17	Spokane	Shamrock Shuffle —13.1, 6.2 or 3.1 mile run/walk
17	Olympia	Olympia Donut Dash 5k —3.1 mile run/walk and kids run