Checking Your Blood Pressure Regularly Can Help You Improve Your Health

About 1 out of 3 Native Americans has high blood pressure. High blood pressure raises the risk for heart attack, stroke, eye problems, and kidney problems. Having your blood pressure checked regularly and taking steps to reach your blood pressure target can improve your health.

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against your artery walls. High blood pressure is when your blood pressure is higher than your target.

Are you at risk?

Anyone, including children, can develop high blood pressure. There are some risks that you cannot change, such as your age. But you can work to reduce your risk by:

- Not smoking or chewing tobacco.
- Eating a healthy diet.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Being physically active.
- Reducing your stress by using positive coping skills or having support.

What are the signs and symptoms?

High blood pressure usually has no warning signs or symptoms. Many people don't know they have it. That's why it's important to have your blood pressure checked often.

How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Your health care provider measures your blood pressure by wrapping your arm with a cuff, then inflating it. Air is slowly released from the cuff. A gauge measures the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats (systolic) and when it rests (diastolic).

How can high blood pressure be controlled?

Here are some things you can do to control high blood pressure:

- Don't smoke or chew tobacco.
- Take your blood pressure medications.
- Get blood pressure checked often.
- Reduce salty foods.
- Lose weight.
- Be physically active.
- Avoid alcohol.