



## Welcome to the Sentara Quality Care Network (or SQCN, pronounced "sequin")

From Grayling Yarbrough, VP, Population Health, Sentara Healthcare



Welcome to the first edition of the SQCN Newsletter, *Healthy Tips: Your Heart*. You are getting this newsletter because your primary care provider (PCP) is a partner within our network. This monthly series seeks to inform and educate you on ways to improve your health and engage with your SQCN PCP and care manager. Together, we will help you become a healthier you.

At SQCN, coordinating your care to create a seamless and simple experience is our top priority. **Best of all, it is free to you just for choosing a PCP in our network!** We hope that you find the information, tips, and contact points from our excellent team of care managers to be beneficial in your journey to better health. You can learn more about our customizable, no-cost services [here](#). We look forward to serving you!

### It's Heart Month

How many U.S. adults have hypertension?

- 1 in 2
- 1 in 3
- 1 in 5
- 1 in 10

It may be more than you think. Find the answer in the story below.

## Heart Health and Hypertension

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), close to **1 in 2 adults have high blood pressure** (47%). About 1 in 5 don't know it. It's normal for your blood pressure to go up and down during the day, but not to stay high. If it stays mostly high (130/80+), it's called hypertension. This can put you at risk for heart disease and stroke.

If you have risk factors—including diabetes—talk with your provider to see if you are a candidate for treatment. Even if you don't feel bad, untreated hypertension can damage your heart, brain, and kidneys. Here are some **questions you can ask your doctor**:

- Should I check my blood pressure regularly at home?
- Do I need to modify my diet?
- How often should I exercise?
- Will medication help?

Here is a [handy chart](#) from the CDC to keep track of your info.

## Hypertension and Children

High blood pressure isn't as common in kids. Still, blood pressure should be checked starting at age 3. The best way to keep your child's blood pressure healthy is to:

- Serve nutritious foods, low in salt.
- Have water available, limit juice.
- Make sure there is daily exercise.
- Keep your child at a healthy weight.

You can check your child's [body mass index \(BMI\) here](#). Contact your family doctor or pediatrician with any concerns.

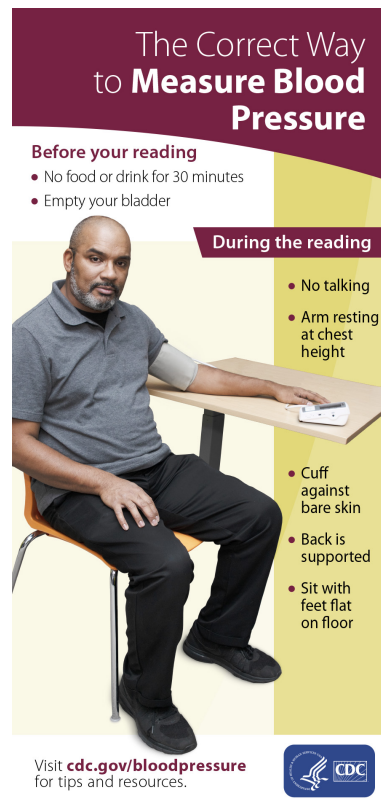
## How to Check Blood Pressure at Home

Yes, there is a right and wrong way to check your blood pressure.

See the graphic to the right. This is the correct way to take a reading at home for you or a loved one.

Use a [blood pressure log](#) to keep track of the numbers. This will help you and your doctor.

[Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *High Blood Pressure*. [www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure](http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure).]



## Ask Your Pharmacist: Heart Medications

You may be on medications that can help your heart. It is important to take as prescribed as they can:

- Improve your blood pressure.
- Lower your cholesterol.
- Benefit your kidneys.
- Reduce your risk for cardiac events (for example, a stroke or heart attack).

It is important to take these medications every day, even if you feel well. If you experience side effects let your doctor know. They can make changes that will help. Many of the medications used for blood pressure and cholesterol are available as a generic. This provides great health benefits but at a much lower cost. Your doctor can help you decide which medications are best for you. Your health plan also offers a mail order service.

## Care Corner: Diabetes and Your Heart

Do you have diabetes? Having diabetes can cause many issues, including problems with your heart. You are more than twice as likely to have heart disease than a person without it. This is due to high blood sugar causing damage to nerves and blood vessels.

Download our "[Diabetes and Your Heart](#)" [tip sheet](#) for more info.

We have a care management team ready to help you with:

- Learning what affects glucose control.
- Options including meds and glucose monitoring.
- Benefits for continuous glucose monitoring (CGMs).
- Eating and exercise.
- Lowering risk for problems.

If you are interested in learning more or getting started, please contact Julie Pierantoni, MSN, RN, CDCES, Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist at 434-532-9792 or [japieran@sentara.com](mailto:japieran@sentara.com).

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**Questions? Contact the SQCN Team:**

**757-455-7330 | [SQCN@sentara.com](mailto:SQCN@sentara.com)**

**Find a [SQCN Provider](#)**

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