

healthmatters

Fall 2022

5 steps to lower your risk for breast cancer

There are some risks for breast cancer that you can't change—like age, family history of breast cancer, and race.

There are other risk factors you can change, however. Follow these smart lifestyle strategies:

1

SCALE BACK.

Women who are overweight or obese after menopause have a higher risk for breast cancer than those at a healthy weight.

2

STAY ON THE MOVE.

Physical activity can help lower your chances of getting breast cancer.

3

DON'T TIP YOUR GLASS TOO OFTEN.

The more you drink, the more you're at risk. One alcoholic beverage a day can add up to a 10% increase in risk; two to three drinks a day bumps it to 20%.

4

CLEAR THE SMOKE AWAY.

There is evidence that smoking may increase breast cancer risk.

5

THINK PRODUCE.

Some studies suggest that a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich dairy—but low in red and processed meats—might help lower the risk for breast cancer.

Are you a BF&M health insurance customer?

Make the most out of our free wellness programme, LiveWell. Through its engaging online platform and in-person sessions, LiveWell offers:

- ✓ Wellness assessments
- ✓ Personalised advice
- ✓ Nutrition education
- ✓ Healthy living workshops
- ✓ Mental health and lifestyle management support
- ✓ Wellness challenges with prizes

All included as part of your BF&M health insurance so you can live your healthiest life.

ONE LAST TIP: Don't forget about screening. Mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early, when it's most treatable. Talk with your healthcare provider about when to start mammograms and how often to get them.



GET SCREENED. To schedule digital mammography, visit chc.bm.

LiveWell with BF&M

Get started today at bfm.bm/LiveWell.

High blood pressure: Beyond the numbers

In many ways, high blood pressure is a condition of facts and figures. After all, it's defined by two digits: the pressure when your heart beats (systolic) over the pressure when it relaxes (diastolic).

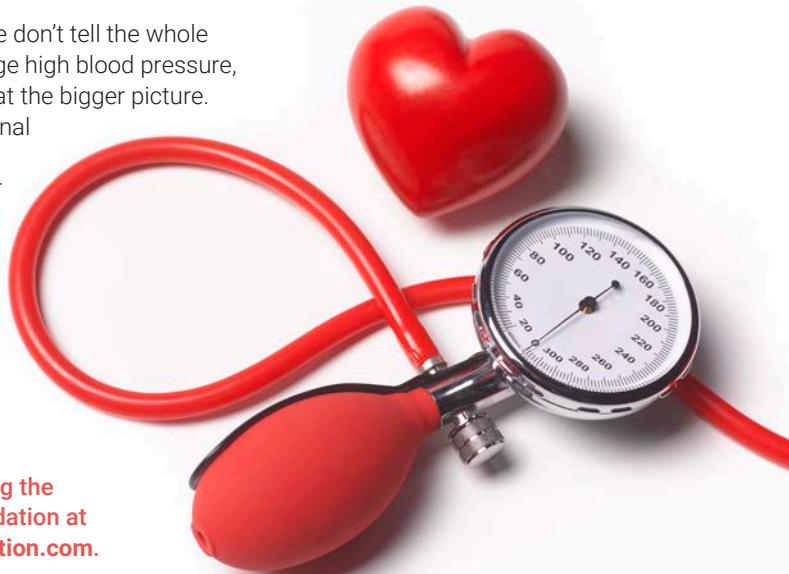
Together, these numbers describe the force with which blood travels through your arteries:

- **Optimal** is lower than 120 mmHg and 80 mmHg.
- **Normal** is 120 to 129 mmHg and 80 to 84 mmHg.
- **Pre-hypertensive** is 130 to 139 mmHg and 85 to 89 mmHg.
- **Hypertensive** is 140 mmHg or higher and 90 mmHg or higher.

But the numbers alone don't tell the whole story. To better manage high blood pressure, or hypertension, look at the bigger picture. High numbers can signal habits that might be affecting your broader health and well-being.

GET HEART SMART.

Learn more about heart health by visiting the Bermuda Heart Foundation at bermudaheartfoundation.com.



Start with an open, honest conversation with your healthcare provider. Ask what your numbers mean for your health. Talk about your goals for treatment and how to accomplish them.

Discuss the power of healthy lifestyle changes, like:

- Choosing heart-healthy foods, such as vegetables, whole grains, and fish
- Cutting back on salt
- Exercising regularly
- Coping with stress

Managing high blood pressure involves a lifelong commitment—but it pays off in greater well-being and resilience.

10 extra minutes of exercise saves lives

For years, health experts have preached the perks of taking the stairs instead of the elevator and parking farther away from the grocery store. A recent U.S. study uncovered just how drastic the results can be: If every adult in that country ages 40 to 85 increased their amount of exercise by just 10 minutes per day, the number of deaths would decrease by 6.9%, saving more than 110,000 lives annually.

How, exactly, can such a small amount of exercise make a difference? Not long after a moderate to vigorous bout of physical activity, you'll find:

- Your anxiety decreases
- Your sleep improves
- Your blood pressure drops

And over time, each active moment adds up. Long-term benefits of regular physical activity include:

- Reduced risk for heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes
- Prevention of many types of cancer
- Stronger bones and muscles
- Improved coordination and balance, reducing your risk of falling
- Warding off weight gain

All these factors contribute to the life-extending benefits of movement.



RADIATION THERAPY in Bermuda has transformed care

The Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre's Radiation Therapy Unit has made an incredible impact on patient care since it opened its doors five years ago. Operating in affiliation with the Dana-Farber Brigham Cancer Center in Boston, the unit allows 95% of patients referred for radiation treatment to be treated in Bermuda instead of traveling abroad.

Since the unit's opening in 2017, people in Bermuda are twice as likely to receive radiation therapy, have four times more access to radiation therapy (for HIP and uninsured), and have six times more access to palliative care.

The local radiation therapy unit has also eased the cost for Bermuda's healthcare system, saving \$35 million over the past five years. "What many people don't realise is just how much insurance companies were paying for overseas treatments, let alone the addition of airfare and hotel stipends," says Dr. Chris Fosker, medical director and radiation oncologist at Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre.

Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre subsidises \$7.9 million in treatment costs for underinsured and uninsured patients, so there is no co-pay. This, along with the ability to stay local, allows patients to focus on what matters most: their wellness.

DISCOVER THE BENEFITS. To learn more about the impact of providing radiation therapy in Bermuda over the past five years, please visit cancer.bm/about-us--services/services/radiation-therapy.

What to do after your ER visit

If you visited an emergency room (ER) during a health scare, it's doubtful you want to return. To prevent a repeat visit, it's important to get the follow-up care you need.

When you left the ER, you should have received instructions about what happens next. Stick to them by:

- **Making—and keeping—any recommended appointments.** This may involve getting additional tests, visiting with new providers, or checking in with your regular healthcare provider. Generally, your next appointment should be within seven days of your discharge date.
- **Closing the loop.** If your next appointment is with a specialist, make sure your regular provider also knows about your ER visit.
- **Taking care of yourself.** Follow your provider's orders regarding self-care, such as resting and drinking plenty of fluids. You might also need to steer clear of certain activities for a while.
- **Minding your medicines.** Fill any new prescriptions and take them as directed.

Call your provider or ask the pharmacist if you have questions and before you take a new over-the-counter drug or supplement.

- **Monitoring symptoms.** Contact your regular provider if you have new health problems or if your existing issues worsen.

No matter the reason you visited the ER, your healthcare isn't complete until you've followed up.



If you think eating healthy is expensive, think again. Here's how to keep your diet nutritious without busting your supermarket budget.

BEFORE YOU SHOP:

- Plan your meals for an entire week and write down what you will need. Making fewer trips saves on gas.
- Consider low-cost, healthy substitutions, such as beans or lentils instead of meat.
- Check your supplies on hand. Use these items rather than purchasing duplicates.
- Make a grocery list and stick to it.
- Don't shop hungry, or you will be more likely to make impulse purchases.
- Look for discounts in store flyers or on their website or social media pages.

AT THE STORE:

- Avoid shopping the shelves at eye level, where stores often stock the most expensive products.
- Opt for store brands over name brands.
- Buy produce in season; out-of-season produce is more expensive.
- Choose bulk or value-packaged sizes of meat and poultry. Freeze what you don't need.
- Consider canned fish as a low-cost option to fresh fish.
- Buy larger sizes of dairy products to save money—but be sure to check the expiration date.

The 26th Annual BF&M Breast Cancer Awareness Walk

Wednesday,
October 12th, 2022

Barr's Bay Park
at 6:00 p.m.



Register at
racedayworld.com



All funds raised support our Equal Access Fund and our Prevention and Early Detection Programmes. www.chc.bm.



EDITOR Brenda Dale, Associate Head of Wellness at BF&M

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