

# Elevated blood pressure

## (Pre-hypertension)



### What is elevated blood pressure (BP)?

Your child's blood pressure (BP) is high but is not high enough to be called hypertension. Your child has what is called elevated BP (pre-hypertension).

The doctor has diagnosed your child with elevated BP because:

- Their BP is above the numbers that are normal,

**AND**

- Their BP is below the numbers considered hypertension (very high BP),

**AND**

- They are not taking BP medicines.

#### For example:

- For teens:
  - A BP above 130/80 is hypertension.
  - A BP below 120/80 is normal.
  - Elevated BP for teens is when the top number is between 120 and 130.
- For younger children, the number that is considered elevated is lower than for teens. The top number or the bottom number can be elevated.

### What is the treatment for elevated BP?

Most often, your child will not need BP medicines to treat elevated BP. Instead, the care team will advise lifestyle changes. Some lifestyle changes are listed in the chart below and continued on page 2.

Lifestyle change	What to do
Make healthy food choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid high salt (sodium) foods.</li><li>• Follow a DASH diet.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– High in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy</li><li>– Less food that is high in saturated fat or sugar</li></ul></li></ul>
Stay active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do moderate to heavy activity (exercise) for at least 3 to 5 days every week.</li><li>• Each activity session should last 30 to 60 minutes.</li></ul>

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

## Elevated blood pressure (pre-hypertension), continued

Lifestyle changes	What to do
Avoid tobacco products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not smoke things like:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Cigarettes</li><li>– Electronic cigarettes/vapes</li><li>– Cigars</li></ul></li><li>• Do not use chewing tobacco.</li></ul>

### Please note:

Children who are overweight will need support from their care team to help manage their weight.

### What happens if my child's elevated BP does not improve?

Your child will need special testing if their BP does not improve after about 6 months. The care team may choose other treatments based on the results.

The risk of hypertension and its complications are higher if your child's elevated BP continues over time. Complications of hypertension may include:

- Headaches or vision problems
- Heart problems
- Stroke
- Kidney problems

### What follow-up care does my child need?

Schedule regular visits with your child's primary care provider (PCP). It is important that they check your child's BP. Following these guidelines for lifestyle changes will help reduce the risk of long-term complications from elevated BP. However, some children with elevated BP may develop hypertension. Call the doctor if your child has headaches or changes in vision.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**