



**NEWS RELEASE**    **Mobile County Health Department**  
**April 2, 2010**

251 N. Bayou St.  
P.O. Box 2867  
Mobile, AL 36652  
[www.mobilecountyhealth.org](http://www.mobilecountyhealth.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** David Mann, Public Information Officer, 690-8823, [dmann@mobilecountyhealth.org](mailto:dmann@mobilecountyhealth.org)

---

**April 5-11 is National Public Health Week**

April 5-11 is National Public Health Week. The theme of this year's observance is "A Healthier America: One Community at a Time." And in showing its support, the Mobile County Health Department is working to increase awareness of the importance of physical activity.

Dr. Bert Eichold, Health Officer, says that physical activity is a key factor in the prevention and control of many illnesses, especially high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes.

"When you are not physically active, you are more likely to be overweight, get heart disease, develop type 2 diabetes, have high blood pressure, have high blood cholesterol, and have a stroke," he says

Eichold also believes the people of Mobile County can make a real difference if they commit to healthy behaviors for themselves, including physical activity, their children, and others they come in contact with.

"With everyone's participation, we can hasten the shift from a health system of sick care to one with more focus on the prevention of disease and injury," he says

For tips on how to increase one's physical activity, go to [www.MobileCountyHealth.org](http://www.MobileCountyHealth.org) and click on the Just Move It tab. There are also free informational handouts available at the Health Department's facility at 251 N. Bayou St.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■



## JUST MOVE IT!

Your physical activity program can be as simple as a 15-minute walk around the block each morning and evening. Gradually build up your program and set new goals to stay motivated. The important thing is to find something you enjoy, and do it safely. And remember, trying too hard at first can lead to injury and cause you to give up. If you have a chronic health problem or a family history of heart disease at an early age, be sure to talk with your doctor before launching a new physical activity program.

### COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **How can I fit physical activity into my busy schedule?**

Try breaking up your 30 minutes of activity throughout the day. For instance, take a brisk walk (3-4 miles per hour) in the morning for 10 minutes, rake leaves for 10 minutes, and take another 10-minute walk after dinner.

- **I am elderly and have difficulty moving. Should I still try to exercise?**

Yes, but be sure you talk to your doctor first to find out which activities are right for you. There are even activities you can do while sitting down.

- **How can I prevent injuries?**

Gradually build up the intensity and duration of your physical activity program over many weeks or months to avoid overdoing it. And always stretch before and after.

### TIPS FOR BECOMING—AND STAYING—A HEALTHIER YOU

- **Set a schedule and keep to it.**
- **Get a friend or family member to join you.** Motivate each other to keep it up.
- **Cross-train.** Alternate between different activities so you do not strain one part of the body day after day.
- **Set goals.**
- **Reward yourself.** At the end of each month that you stay on your exercise program, reward yourself with something new—new clothes, a compact disc, a new book—something that will help keep you committed. But don't use food as a reward.

### TIPS TO EASILY INCREASE YOUR DAILY ACTIVITY

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park far away from your destination in parking lots so you have farther to walk.
- If you take public transportation, get off a stop early.
- If your blood pressure is moderately elevated, 30 minutes of brisk walking most days a week may be enough to keep you off medication.
- If you take medication for high blood pressure, 30 minutes of moderate physical activity can make your medication work more effectively and make you feel better.
- If you don't have high blood pressure, being physically active can help keep it that way. If you have normal blood pressure—but are not active—your chances of developing high blood pressure increase, especially as you get older or if you become overweight or obese or develop diabetes.

### OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- **Home care and general cleaning**
- **Mowing the lawn** (with power mower)
- **Dancing**
- **Racket sports, such as table tennis**
- **Swimming** (with moderate effort)
- **Canoeing or rowing** (about 2-3.9 miles per hour)
- **Home repair, such as painting**
- **Gardening**
- **Golf** (walking the course)
- **Cycling** (10 miles per hour or less)
- **Fishing** (standing and casting, walking, or wading)



# Understanding High Blood Pressure

## What is high blood pressure?

- High blood pressure (also known as hypertension) is the condition caused when the force of blood pushing against the walls of the blood vessels leading away from your heart is too strong.

## Is high blood pressure dangerous?

- Yes. It can kill you.

## How is blood pressure measured?

- Two levels of pressure are measured and recorded as numbers. These levels are called the systolic pressure (the top number) and the diastolic pressure (the bottom number).
- Your blood pressure is high if your top number is 140 or higher and your bottom number is 90 or higher.

## What things increase my risk of developing high blood pressure?

### Things you can control:

- Being very overweight
- Eating too much salt and fat
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Smoking
- Not exercising
- Stress

### Things you cannot control:

- Race: African Americans develop high blood pressure more often than other races.
- Heredity: A tendency to have high blood pressure runs in families.
- Age: The older you get, your chance of developing high blood pressure becomes greater.

## What can I do to help control my blood pressure?

- Follow your doctor's instructions
- Eat foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat and sodium (salt)
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Women should not have more than one serving of alcohol per day
- Men should not have more than two servings of alcohol per day

- Do not smoke
- **Exercise**
- Learn how to manage stress and relax

## Remember

Try not to make too many changes at once. If you work on one thing at a time, you'll be more likely to stick to your lifestyle changes. Think to yourself... ***"I can do it!"***

## Blood Pressure Categories

Systolic		Diastolic	=	Category	
Less than 120	and	Less than 80	=	Normal	Good for you!
120-139	or	80-89	=	Prehypertension	Your blood pressure could be a problem.
140-159	or	90-99	=	High – Stage 1	You have high blood pressure. Ask a doctor or nurse how to control it.
160 or higher	or	100 or higher	=	High – Stage 2	



# Understanding Diabetes

## What is diabetes?

- Diabetes means that your blood sugar is too high. Your body changes most of the food you eat into sugar. But too much sugar in the blood is not good for your health.
- Insulin helps the sugar from food get into body cells. If your body does not make enough insulin or the insulin does not work right, the sugar can't get into the cells, so it stays in the blood. This makes your blood sugar level high, causing you to have diabetes.

## Am I at risk for diabetes?

Things that can put you at risk for diabetes:

- Age: Although a person of any age can have diabetes, it is most common in people older than 45.
- Being overweight
- Having a baby that weighs over 9 pounds at birth
- Family History: Having a mother, father, brother, or sister with diabetes
- Race/ethnicity: If your family background is African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, American Indian, Alaska Native, or Pacific Islander
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Exercising less than 3 times a week
- Having a history of heart disease or stroke

## What are the signs of diabetes?

If you have one or more of these signs, see your doctor.

- Being very thirsty
- Urinating a lot
- Feeling very hungry
- Feeling very tired
- Losing weight without trying
- Having sores that are slow to heal
- Having dry, itchy skin
- Losing feeling in or having tingling in the hands or feet
- Having blurred vision
- Having more infections than usual

## How can I take care of myself if I have diabetes?

Many people with diabetes can live healthy and full lives. You can too by following your doctor's orders and remember the following advice:

- Diet: It is important for you to limit the fatty foods that you eat such as fried food. It is also important to eat more whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables,
- Weight Control: If you lose weight, it can improve your blood sugar level.

- **Exercise**: If you walk or do other exercise for at least 30 minutes at least three times a week, you can improve your blood sugar level.
- Keep track of your blood sugar levels.



# Understanding Obesity

## What is obesity?

- Obesity means having too much body fat. It is different from being overweight, which means weighing too much. The weight may come from muscle, bone, fat, and/or body water. Both “obesity” and “being overweight” mean that a person's weight is greater than what is considered healthy for his or her height.

## What causes obesity?

- Obesity occurs over time when you eat more calories than you use. The balance between calories-in and calories-out differs for each person.
- Factors that might tip the balance include your genetic makeup, overeating, eating high-fat foods, and not being physically active.

## Is obesity dangerous?

- Yes. Being obese increases your risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, arthritis, and some cancers.
- If you are obese, losing even 5 to 10 percent of your weight can delay or prevent some of these diseases.

## How is obesity measured?

- One method is by determining Body Mass Index. (See BMI Index Table on reverse side.)

## What are some suggestions for losing weight?

Most experts recommend that someone attempting to lose a large amount of weight consult with a personal physician or health care professional before beginning a weight-loss program. *The Surgeon General's Healthy Weight Advice for Consumers* makes the following general recommendations:

- People who need to lose weight should do so gradually, at a rate of one-half to two pounds per week.

**Exercise**. The safest and most effective way to lose weight is to reduce calories and increase physical activity. In other words, use up more calories than you take in.

- Eat well.
- Select sensible portion sizes.

---

If your Body Mass Index is	Then you are
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal
25.0-29.9	Overweight
30 and above	Obese

**Note:** BMI may overestimate body fat in athletes and others who have a muscular build and underestimate body fat in older people who have lost muscle mass.  
*Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute*

## Body Mass Index (BMI) Table (Adult Men & Women)

	<i>Underweight</i>				<i>Normal</i>					<i>Overweight</i>					<i>Obese</i>					
<b>BMI</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Height</i>	<i>Body Weight (pounds)</i>																			
<b>4'10"</b>	77	82	86	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
<b>4'11"</b>	79	84	89	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
<b>5'</b>	82	87	92	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
<b>5'1"</b>	85	90	96	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
<b>5'2"</b>	88	93	99	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
<b>5'3"</b>	91	96	102	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
<b>5'4"</b>	93	99	105	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
<b>5'5"</b>	96	102	108	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
<b>5'6"</b>	99	106	112	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
<b>5'7"</b>	102	109	115	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
<b>5'8"</b>	105	112	119	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
<b>5'9"</b>	109	115	122	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
<b>5'10"</b>	112	119	126	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
<b>5'11"</b>	115	122	129	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
<b>6'</b>	118	125	133	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
<b>6'1"</b>	121	129	137	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
<b>6'2"</b>	125	133	140	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
<b>6'3"</b>	128	136	144	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279

Source: Adapted from *Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults*, 1998.