Live Healthy Lorain County

Worksite Wellness Package

**Blood Pressure Monitoring Campaign**

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Introduction:

This document is a quick start guide to begin a blood pressure wellness campaign. The focus is to provide participants with education and skills to help improve blood pressure measurements and maintenance over time.

Why Start a Blood Pressure Campaign?

Currently, more than one-third (35%) of Lorain County adults have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, which is higher than the United States’ national rate of 31.3% (CHA, 2011). High blood pressure and high cholesterol are two major risk factors for heart disease and stroke. High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because it often has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people don't realize they have it. That's why it's important to get your blood pressure checked regularly. The good news is that you can take steps to prevent high blood pressure, or to treat it if it is already high.

By hosting a blood pressure monitoring campaign, your worksite or faith-based organization can support people in making healthier choices to improve their overall wellness.

Tips to Make the Most of your Campaign:

- Work with your insurance Provider
- Maintain a Wellness Committee
- Create campaign teams for each of your health promotion programs
- Gain acceptance from administration

For information on the above topics, visit welcoa.org or contact the Lorain County General Health District

Materials Needed

- Automatic Blood Pressure Monitor/Cuff
  - Cost varies depending on device. $40-$70
  - One Device per 30-40 employees

The Four Step Blood Pressure Campaign Challenge

**Step 1: Get people interested and energized to participate**

In order to get employees energized and on board with the campaign, promote the topic in advance and send out a recruitment email. You may reference our sample Recruitment Email and tailor it to fit your company’s needs. You can also advertise the campaign in advance to gain more participants. Place the sample Promotional Flier at strategic places around your organization where many members can see the advertisement. Collect names for a couple of days leading up to the first day of the campaign by putting the Sample Sign-Up sheet in a common location for interested employees to join.

  - *Suggestion:* Promote the program period as a Know Your Numbers, awareness campaign and not a competition for the overall best blood pressure measurement. Having to share blood pressure measurements could deter employees from participating. Instead, use the campaign to build relationships between departments.
**Step 2: Decide to use any or all of the following ideas and methods for your program**

- **Build Winning Teams.** The number of teams are determined by how many want to participate. Choose the team size based on how many participants have signed up, but teams should be comprised of approximately 4-6 members. It is best to draw teams at random based.
  - *Suggestion:* Teams can be determined either by drawing a team all at once (4-6 straight draws become a team) or creating teams all at once (each draw will be assigned to a different team, until all participants are assigned a team).

- **Send Weekly Email Quizzes.** Email Quizzes can help to educate the participants and increase their buy-in of the challenge. Allow and encourage team members to collaborate on answers, which may lead to engagement, social interaction and health conversations.
  - *Suggestion:* Email quiz questions each Monday of the program. Participant answer submissions could be due on Wednesday and the answers could be released each Friday with explanations.
  - *Suggestion:* Track team member participation by using the Sample Team Participation Sheet and use this to help choose a winning team.

- **Provide Health Info to Participants.**
  - *Suggestion:* Use the sample Newsletters to create awareness and provide information on blood pressure and heart health.
  - *Suggestion:* Send info via emails, payroll/mailbox stuffers, an employee or organization secure website, or place them as articles within an existing newsletter.

- **Promote Materials & Resources.** To reinforce behavior concepts, send credible health information via email, newsletter, posted signage, etc.

**Step 3: Help participants monitor and track their blood pressure**

Place your blood pressure monitors in common area that is accessible to all participants. Have participants submit a weekly blood pressure measurement to record. Provide them with Blood Measuring Tips so they will get a more accurate reading.

**Tracking**

- To allow for employee privacy, identify employees by number rather than name. This number can be used to keep track of blood pressure measurements or personal information.
- Each employee should be given a number at the start of the campaign. Have participants submit by campaign number when turning in the weekly blood pressure reading. Individual blood pressure results should be tracked for employee participant use only.
  - *Suggestion:* Have a volunteer, or wellness committee member, record each participant’s weekly blood pressure reading. See the Sample Measurement Tracking Sheet, for an example for how to keep track of weekly participant measurements.
Suggestion: Reassure participants that the numbers will only be viewed by the recorder.

- By tracking this data your organization will be able to identify the number of employees that have a normal blood pressure level and those that are considered to be hypertensive.
  - Suggestion: Use the data to show how the campaign affected the participants by counting how many individuals fall in the normal, pre-hypertensive, and hypertensive groups (as defined by the American Heart Association) at the beginning and end of the campaign.

**Step 4: Use the tracking sheets to determine a winning team**

- **Determine the winning team.** The winning team should be based on team participation in activities such as answering quiz questions correctly and submitting weekly blood pressure measurements. Teams should not be rewarded on having a “good” blood pressure reading or for any personal improvements made during the campaign.

- **Announce the winning team.** Announce the winning team to all participants in an email or newsletter. If there were prizes or incentives involved, announce those as well.

- **Results Notification.** Send a summary of the campaign results to the whole organization. Include participation rates and possible next steps for individuals. Reinforce the tips and materials shared throughout the campaign to support heart health. Checkout the [Campaign Summary Results](#) template for ideas.

- **Continue to promote.** Provide participants with access to the blood pressure monitors and remind them that they are available, so they monitor blood pressure routinely.
Appendices:

A – Sample Recruitment Email Blast

[Insert Company Name] Staff:

This email serves as a request for participation in the [Insert Campaign Name]:

Team up for the health of YOUR heart and a chance to win [insert prizes/incentives].

- The Blood Pressure monitoring campaign is completely voluntary. All participants will be assigned a participant number and Blood Pressure readings will not be associated with individual names. Blood Pressure readings will be tracked to determine the success of the employee wellness program and will not be shared with insurance providers or any other outside providers.

- [Insert Campaign Name] can help you:
  - Know your numbers
  - Lower your sodium intake through proper diet
  - Improve your health

- Digital blood pressure monitors will be used.

- Sign-up at the [Insert Location] or register by email to [Insert Name of Employee to Track Readings].

- Participants will be assigned to a [Insert Company Name] team.

- Each participant will be asked to answer weekly quiz questions and submit weekly Blood Pressure readings.

- Don’t miss out on this opportunity. Join a team. Connect with colleagues. Have fun!

This [Insert Company Wellness Program Name] event will start [Insert Start Date and Time] and end [Insert End Date and Time]. Sign-up Today!
The Blood Pressure monitoring campaign is **completely voluntary**. All participants will be assigned a participant number and BP readings will not be associated with individual names. Blood Pressure readings will be tracked to determine the success of the employee wellness program and will not be shared with insurance providers or any other outside providers.

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Take the Challenge. Know Your Numbers. Live Healthy.

Why should I take the Challenge?

- Maintain heart health
- Connect with others
- Feel great!

What do I have to do?

- Weekly blood pressure checks
- Answer heart health quiz questions
- Encourage others to participate

Sign-up at [Insert Location] or register by email to [Insert Name].
Blood Pressure Measurement Tips

**IMPORTANT:** Measure your blood pressure at the same time each day for accuracy – blood pressure rises and falls throughout the day.

According to the American Heart Association (NHLBI) a Blood Pressure reading is more likely to be accurate if you do the following:

- Wait at least 30 minutes after smoking, exercising, eating or drinking caffeinated beverages before taking your blood pressure.
- Use the bathroom before taking your reading. A full bladder can alter results.
- When self monitoring, it is recommended that the non-dominant arm be used.
- Sit quietly before taking a reading. Sit in a comfortable position with your legs and ankles uncrossed and your back supported against a chair. Try to be calm and not think about stressful things.
- Place the cuff on bare skin, not over clothing. Rolling up a sleeve until it tightens around your arm can result in an inaccurate reading.
- **Make sure your arm is positioned properly.** Rest your arm, at the level of your heart, on a table, desk or even on a cushion to elevate it high enough.
- Don’t talk during a reading.
- Take two or three readings at least two minutes apart, and average the results.

**Warnings:**

- Blood pressure varies throughout the day.
- If a reading shows that your blood pressure is higher than normal and you experience symptoms such as severe headache, chest pain, numbness, or tingling in the face or limbs, contact your primary medical office immediately or seek emergency treatment.
- Contact your doctor if you have any unusual or persistent increases in your blood pressure.

Source:
- [National Heart Lung and Blood Institute - How Is High Blood Pressure Diagnosed?](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/how-is-high-blood-pressure-diagnosed)
## E– Sample Tracking Sheets

### Sample Measurement Tracking Sheet

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Blood Pressure Quiz Questions:

Send these weekly questions for participants, providing them with a chance to earn team points.

1. Which of the following can help you to decrease risk of hypertension?
   a. Maintaining a healthy weight
   b. Not smoking
   c. Limiting alcohol use
   d. All of the above

The correct answer is D. All of the above.

Important steps that everyone can take to decrease the risk of hypertension:
- Check your blood pressure regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol, limit salt and processed foods.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Be physically active.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Don't smoke.

Source: http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/resources/teamuppressuredown.html#PaHypertension

2. What blood pressure measurement is considered hypertensive?
   a. 120 over 80
   b. 130 over 85
   c. 140 over 90
   d. 210 over 120

The correct answer is C. 140 over 90. This reading (140 over 90) indicates stage one hypertension. A blood pressure of 120/80 to 129/89 is termed pre-hypertension. Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80. If either the systolic (higher number) or diastolic (lower number) is in one of the ranges listed above, that is the category that you are in. So, for example, if your blood pressure were 122/70 consistently, you would be called pre-hypertensive.

Source: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hbp/

3. Hypertension is the main cause of which of these?
   a. Cancer
   b. Strokes
   c. Diabetes
   d. Congestive heart failure

The correct answer is B. Strokes. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke by damaging and weakening your brain's blood vessels, causing them to narrow, rupture or leak. High blood pressure can also cause blood clots to form in the arteries leading to your brain, blocking blood flow and potentially causing a stroke. Keeping your blood pressure under control reduces your risk of heart attack and stroke. More than half of the world's stroke deaths are caused by elevated blood pressure levels.

Sources: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hbp/: www.cdc.gov/Features/Stroke/

4. Which of these contribute to hypertension?
The correct answer is B. High alcohol consumption. Excess alcohol intake is associated with high blood pressure. The CDC recommends alcohol intake in moderation—no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men.
Source: www.cdc.gov/salt/

5. What can you do to control high blood pressure?
   a. Attain and maintain a healthy weight
   b. Exercise regularly
   c. Take the blood pressure medication prescribed by your doctor
   d. All of the above

The correct answer is D. All of the above. Although you can't change certain risk factors such as age and family health history, you can choose a lifestyle that promotes heart health. Keeping physically active and eating nutritiously will keep you and your heart healthy.
Sources: www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/what_you_can_do.htm

G – Newsletter Samples

1. Employee Blood Pressure Campaign Notification

{Blood Pressure Campaign Name} {Campaign Dates (XXX-XXX)}

Team up for the health of YOUR heart and a chance to win prizes!

- This quarter’s Blood Pressure monitoring campaign is completely voluntary.
- Participants will be assigned to a [Insert Company Name] Team.
- Each participant will be asked to answer weekly quiz questions and take weekly Blood Pressure measurement.
- Sign-up at [Insert Location] or register by email to [Insert Name].

  Don’t miss out on this opportunity. Join a team.
  Connect with colleagues. Have fun!

2. 8 Tips to Slash Salt Consumption

Eating high amounts of salt is linked with high blood pressure. Reducing sodium in the diet can prevent and control high blood pressure. Follow this quick list to reduce your daily sodium consumption.

- **Avoid Restaurants.** You have more control over the amount of salt when you cook at home.
- **Read Labels.** Check all labels before food is prepared so you know how much sodium you're starting with.
- **Cook with Herbs and Spices.** Prepare foods with sodium-free spices and herbs, such as basil, curry, garlic, lemon, oregano, pepper, rosemary, and thyme.
- **Discover Low-Sodium Recipes.** Get creative with fresh flavors so you won't feel tempted to grab the saltshaker.
- **Eat Fresh.** Avoid canned or processed foods. Opt for fresh veggies over canned. If canned foods are used, rinse contents before using.
• **Make Substitutions.** Layer sandwiches or wraps with fresh, crunchy veggies instead of pickles or olives. Try herb-infused oils to dress foods instead of salad dressings, ketchup, barbecue sauce or other salty condiments.

• **Reduce While Cooking.** Cut the salt for what the recipe calls for in half and/or only salt food after it is cooked.

• **Remove the Table Shaker.** If the shaker is visible, you will be more tempted to add salt after you sit down to eat.

> **Take these small steps to reduce salt intake and improve your heart!**

**Sources:**
- [www.cdc.gov/features/highbloodpressure/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/highbloodpressure/)

3. **Lower Your Blood Pressure in a DASH!**

Exercise and maintaining a healthy weight have always been powerful tools for managing high blood pressure, but food choices play an integral role as well. Follow the DASH diet and keep blood pressure under control. Designed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the **DASH** (**D**ietary **A**pproaches to **S**top **H**ypertension) plan can help protect against osteoporosis, cancer, and heart disease. Tweak your diet to incorporate the principles of the DASH Plan.

**Here is the DASH plan in hurry:**
- Increase whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products
- Consume more fish, poultry and legumes
- Limit red meats, sweets and fats
- Restrict saturated fat, cholesterol, and total fat levels
- Boost fiber and nutrients such as magnesium, potassium and calcium
- Reduce sodium intake

> **View the DASH Eating Plan for detailed directions to start improving your heart health today!**

**Sources:**
- [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/)

4. **Stressed, Worried, Anxious?!?**

High levels of stress can impact blood pressure and your overall health.

> **Take these small steps to de-stress, lower your blood pressure and improve your ticker!**

- **Share your work load** - ask a co-worker to help you with a project, or ask a friend or family member to help out with a household task.
- **Take charge of your time** - Organize your time, and make schedules that are realistic.
- **Combine errands** - Go to the drug store and post office in one trip.
- **Cook in larger quantities** - Double recipes when you cook, and freeze the other half to enjoy later.
- **Try a 10 minute “time out”** – Pamper yourself by taking a walk, deep breathing or stretching
5. **How to Improve Blood Pressure**

People at any age can take steps each day to keep blood pressure levels normal; or the best it can be, considering age and family history. The CDC recommends five important lifestyle factors that influence blood pressure:

1. **Eat a healthy diet.** Eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables can help keep your blood pressure down. Limit sodium intake by reducing the amount of salt you add to your food.
2. **Be physically active.** Physical activity can help lower blood pressure. Adults should engage in moderate physical activities for at least 30 minutes on five or more days of the week. For more information on healthy diet and nutrition, see CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Website - [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/index.html).
3. **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight can raise your blood pressure. Losing weight can help you lower your blood pressure. If you know your height and weight, you can compute your body mass index (BMI) at CDC’s Assessing Your Weight Website - [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/index.html).
4. **Don't smoke.** If you don’t smoke, don’t start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease and stroke.
5. **Limit alcohol use.** Drinking too much alcohol is associated with high blood pressure also. If you drink alcohol, you should do so in moderation—no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks per day for men.

Sources:
- CDC: Blood Pressure Prevention – [www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/prevention.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/prevention.htm)
- CDC: How to Prevent Blood Pressure – [www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/what_you_can_do.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/what_you_can_do.htm)
- CDC: About Blood Pressure – [www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/about.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/about.htm)

6. **Campaign Summary Results**

Use this sample at the conclusion of the campaign period. Input any special information tracked and campaign details to personalize the below message:

Congratulations to the \[X\] amount participants of the \[Insert Organization Name\] Blood Pressure Campaign. Thank you for taking the time during this \[X\]-week wellness campaign to improve your health and encourage others to do the same.

\[Participation Rate = \frac{No. of Participants}{No. of Eligible Participants} \times 100\]% of \[Insert Organization Name\] monitored their blood pressure and learned healthy ways to keep it in check. Thank you for the participation!

Please continue to check your blood pressure on a routine basis. It’s important to Know Your Numbers!
For more blood pressure information, check out the following resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- American Heart Association – [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)
- Health Finder — [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)
- Million Hearts — [www.millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://www.millionhearts.hhs.gov)