

## My Goal:

# Taking my blood pressure medications as prescribed

You play a very important role in controlling your blood pressure (BP). If your health care provider has prescribed medication to treat your high BP, it is important that you take them as prescribed.

There are many options and solutions available to help you best manage your medications. With the support of your healthcare provider, you can find an optimal treatment plan.

## Did you know?

**Most people** with high BP take medication for the rest of their life. However, if you are successful in making some lifestyle changes (e.g. healthy eating, exercise, etc.), you may be able to lower your medication levels.

**Two-thirds of patients** need more than one type of drug to control their high BP. Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about combinations of drugs that might reduce the total number of medications you take each day.

## Types of Blood Pressure Medications

Medication will not cure your high BP, but can help lower or control it. It is important to take them as prescribed.

## BP medications include:

- **Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs)\***
- **Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors\***

These 2 groups of drugs work differently to relax blood vessels and help lower BP. \*If you are taking drugs from both groups, it may be necessary to adjust your medications

- **Beta Blockers** – slow down your heart rate, the pumping force of the heart and amount of blood pumped by the heart per minute, helping to lower BP
- **Diuretics (including Thiazides)** – also known as ‘water pills’ increase the kidney’s excretion of sodium (salt), reducing the volume of blood and helping to lower BP
- **Calcium Channel Blockers or Antagonists**  
**Calcium channel blockers** – block the passage of calcium into muscles that control the size of blood vessels, opening up blood vessels; helping to lower BP and decrease heart rate
- **Direct Renin Inhibitors** – suppress an entire hormone system that regulates BP and fluid balance, resulting in 24hr BP control
- **Statins** – are cholesterol drugs that do not lower BP but are often prescribed for vascular protection for patients with high BP who also have other vascular risk factors

**You may have questions or worries about your BP medications, such as:**

**“My BP is getting better, can I lower the amount of medication I’m taking or stop taking it?”**

*It is very important to continue taking medications as prescribed, even if you feel better or notice your BP is going down.*

**“I am worried about side effects.”**

**“I cannot afford my medications.”**

**“I take over-the-counter medications, use traditional or herbal remedies, is that an issue?”**

*Questions, concerns or difficulty with medications should always be discussed with your healthcare provider or pharmacist. There are many options and supports available to make sure your medications are working well for you.*

## Here are some tips for remembering to take your medication:

- ✓ Take your medication at the same time every day
- ✓ Try using a pill organizer (unless they need to be stored in the original container), or ask your pharmacist about daily blister packaging
- ✓ Use reminders, like keeping your medications on the kitchen counter or bedside table, put a sticker on your bathroom mirror or set an alarm
- ✓ When you get your prescription, mark your calendar with the date the prescription will run out. If you still have remaining medication on that date, it's a sign that you may need other strategies to help remember.
- ✓ When you forget a dose of your medication, speak with your pharmacist or healthcare provider about how to get back on track with regular doses to keep your BP under control.

