

GUARANTEED GAZETTE

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High blood pressure

What to know about blood pressure

High blood pressure – or hypertension – usually has no symptoms. But it can cause serious problems, such as stroke, heart disease, heart attacks and kidney failure. That's why having your blood pressure checked regularly is important – even when you're feeling fine.

How to help prevent and treat high blood pressure

Even if you aren't sure or don't currently have high blood pressure, you can take steps to keep your blood pressure under control. Consider these lifestyle choices:

- * Following a healthy eating plan that includes limiting the amount of sodium and sugar
- * Losing weight if you're overweight or obese
- * Exercising regularly
- * Quitting smoking
- * Managing your stress



If you have high blood pressure, your doctor will recommend treatment options to prevent long-term problems. In addition to recommending heart healthy lifestyle choices, your doctor may prescribe medication or a special diet.

Lowering your blood pressure

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension plan is aimed at lowering your blood pressure by focusing on the combinations of nutrients in whole-some foods.

Talk to your doctor

Be proactive. Talk to your doctor about ways to keep your blood pressure in check if you are obese, smoke, don't exercise regularly or eat an unhealthy diet.

Most doctors, clinics and hospitals check your blood pressure with every visit. If you know you're going to have your blood pressure tested, it's a good idea to:

- Avoid drinking coffee or smoking cigarettes for 30 minutes prior to the test. These actions may cause a short-term rise in your blood pressure.
- Go to the bathroom before the test. Having a full bladder can change your blood pressure reading.
- Sit for 5 minutes before the test. Movement can cause short-term rises in blood pressure.

If your blood pressure is high, your doctor may have you return for more tests to check your blood pressure over time before making a diagnosis.



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STAY ALERT

30% of fatal crashes in work zones involve at least one large truck.

1. Defense! Defense!

Commercial drivers have to be constantly vigilant to detect unexpected road conditions, distracted drivers, and motorists who don't understand how commercial vehicles operate.

Scan ahead about 15 seconds (a quarter mile on interstates, or one to two blocks in cities) for traffic issues, work zones, and other dangers.

Check mirrors every 8-10 seconds to be aware of vehicles entering your blind spots.

2. Signal for Safety

Signal and brake to give other drivers plenty of time to notice your intent.

If you must pull off the road, use flashers, reflective triangles, and road flares to alert approaching drivers.

3. Know When to Slow

Driving too fast for weather or road conditions or failing to slow down for curves or ramps create risks for spills and rollovers, as well as crashes.

4. Maintain Your Vehicle

Make sure that pre-trip safety inspections are completed particularly for tires and brakes. Your life depends on them. Make sure your load is well balanced and secure, as a shifting load can cause a rollover or loss of control. Loose materials create road hazards.

5. Buckle Up

Use your safety belt every time. Safety belts save lives, reduce injuries, and allow drivers to stay inside and in control of their vehicles in case of a crash. In 2014, 30% of truck drivers involved in fatal crashes were partially or totally ejected from their vehicles.

6. Stay Sharp

Get enough rest; don't drive when you're fatigued, too ill to focus, or on medications (including over-the-counter medicine) that make you drowsy or dizzy.

7. Get the Right Information for Trip Planning

Stay up to date on weather and road conditions, detours, and mountainous routes in order to plan driving time.

Be aware that non-commercial navigation systems and apps may not provide warning of height and weight limitations and other commercial vehicle restrictions.

8. Practice Work Zone Safety

Work zones present many hazards, like lane shifts, sudden stops, uneven road surfaces, moving workers and equipment, and confused passenger vehicle drivers. In 2014, 30% of fatal work zone crashes involved at least one large truck compared to only 11% of all fatal crashes – so it's vital to take work zone safety seriously.

Slow down, maintain extra following space, and to be prepared to stop.

Obey all work zone signs and signals.

Scan ahead for changing traffic patterns, and be alert to vehicles entering your blind spots.

Keep a sharp eye out for road workers and flag crews.

9. Never Drive Distracted

Texting is among the worst driving distractions. The odds of being involved in a crash, near-crash, or unintentional lane deviation are 23.2 times greater for truck and bus drivers who are texting while driving.

Research shows that drivers texting while driving took their eyes off the forward road for 4.6 seconds on average. At 55 mph, this equates to traveling 371 feet (more than the length of a football field) without looking at the road.

It is illegal for a commercial driver to text while driving, and there are restrictions on using mobile phones (devices must be hands free, and dialed using no more than one button).

Eating, drinking, interacting with a navigational device, map reading, controlling a pet, or any other activity that takes focus off the road can also be a deadly distraction.

If you must attend to an activity other than driving, get off at the next exit or pullover – it's not worth the risk.

1-833-GTS-TANK

Fun Facts

- February and January were the last months added to the Roman numeral calendar.
- Valentine's Day is the second most popular day of the year for sending cards. Christmas is the first most popular.
- If you were born in February your birthstone is amethyst and your flower is primrose.
- Pope Gelasius declared February 14, St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D.
- February is the only month where it's possible to go the entire month without having a full moon.
- Lace is often used on Valentine decorations. The word "lace" comes from the Latin laqueus, meaning "to snare or net," as in to catch a person's heart.
- It was February 1964 when The Beatles made their first American television appearance on the "Ed Sullivan Show." Over 73 million Americans watched.
- On Valentine's Day nearly 189 million stems of roses are sold in the U.S.
- February fluctuates between having 28 and 29 days per year. The 29th day only occurs every 4 years during leap years.
- The most popular flower on Valentine's Day is a single red rose surrounded with baby's breath. The red rose was the flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love.
- February, March, and November always start on the same day of the week unless it is a leap year.
- Richard Cadbury produced the first box of chocolates for Valentine's Day in the late 1800's.
- The odds of being born on February 29th are about 1 in 1,461. Those born on a leap day can be called a "leaper" or "leapling."

BCBS Telemedicine 24/7

Talk with a Doctor Day or Night—365 days a year, 24 hours a day

When you don't feel well, or your child is sick, the last thing you want to do is leave comfort of home to sit in a waiting room. Now, you don't have to. At Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI, we know some questions can't wait. If you need your medical questions answered when your doctor's office is closed, use Telemedicine.

Telemedicine lets you see and talk to a doctor from your mobile device or computer without an appointment. Most visits take about 10-15 minutes and doctors can write a prescriptions, if needed, that you can pick up at your local pharmacy. And, it's part of your health benefits at only a Primary Care Physician copay!

Conditions commonly treated through Telemedicine

Doctors can diagnose and treat a wide range of non-emergent medical conditions, including:

- Cold and flu
- Ear Infections
- Headaches
- Digestive Problems
- Sinus Infections
- Eye Infections
- Skin Conditions
- Allergies

USE TELEMEDICINE WHEN:

- Your doctor is not available
- You become ill while traveling
- You are considering visiting a hospital emergency room for a non-emergency health condition

NOT GOOD FOR:

- Anything requiring an exam or test
- Complex or chronic conditions
- Injuries requiring bandaging or sprains/broken bones

How Do I Sign Up?

Creating an account is easy!

1. Search "Drs. Online" from the Apple or Google app store, or visit drs-online.com
2. Have your BCBSRI member ID information handy, you'll need your subscriber ID number
3. Provide your contact information
4. Set up your username and password



"The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph."

- George Washington

"The best way to predict your future is to create it."

- Abraham Lincoln

Stopping Distance for Semi-trucks

What is the stopping distance for semi-trucks?

Truck drivers, imagine this scenario: It's a beautiful sunny day and you are traveling along with traffic at 60 mph, when the vehicle in front of you suddenly slams on its brakes.

You won't have time to read this important info then, so use this quick guide on the stopping distance for semi-trucks to prepare well.

How long does it take to stop a semi-truck?

At 60 mph, on a clear day, a fully loaded tractor-trailer will need approximately 370 feet to stop, which is more than a football field.

The heavier the vehicle and the faster it is moving, the longer it takes to safely stop, so a loaded truck will take longer to stop than an empty truck — which brings us to the next question:

What is the proper following distance for truck drivers?

The proper following distance is seven to eight seconds. Strive to maintain that and be ready to add to it, up to double that amount when the weather is deteriorating.

How do you calculate and determine following distance?

Watch the vehicle in front of you pass a fixed object such as a tree, light pole or a sign on the side of the road.

When the vehicle in front of you passes the fixed object, start counting the seconds until you have reached the same object. That will tell you how many seconds of following distance there is between you and the vehicle in front of you.

If you ensure you have enough space between you and the vehicle in front of you, there will be ample time to slow down or change lanes to avoid a crash.

How much following distance should you maintain when stopped at traffic lights?

Another part of space management is to stop 20 feet behind other stopped vehicles at traffic lights, stop signs and railroad crossings. This practice will allow you to have enough room to get around the vehicle in front of you in case that vehicle becomes disabled.

Bonus truck driver space management tips

- In order to make your presence known to other vehicles, use your headlights half an hour before dusk and leave them on until half an hour after sunrise. Use your turn signals 100 feet in advance of a turn, and leave the signal on until the turn is completed and you are straight in the lane you are turning into. Take a moment to commit to yourself, your family, and the motoring public that you will do everything possible to give yourself enough following distance to stop your semi-truck if something happens in front of you.



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863-812-4685