Protect yourself from high blood pressure
Did you know that 1 of 3 American adults has high blood pressure? While doctors are unsure of the exact cause, general risk factors include:

• high-salt diets;
• high cholesterol;
• being overweight or obese;
• alcohol consumption;
• inactive lifestyle.

When high blood pressure is left untreated, you risk the danger of suffering a stroke, heart attack, or heart and kidney failure. There are very few visible symptoms, which is why high blood pressure has earned the nickname: “the silent killer.”

What you can do to reduce your risks
Independence Blue Cross (IBC) encourages members to take the necessary steps in preventing serious health issues related to high blood pressure. Even if you believe you are in perfectly good health, you should do the following:

• Get checked. Have your blood pressure checked regularly, even if you feel fine. Blood pressure machines are often available at pharmacies or department stores. If your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher, it is considered high and you should immediately contact your doctor.

• Make healthy lifestyle changes. To reduce your risk, you should make the following changes:
  – lose weight or maintain a healthy weight;
  – quit smoking;
  – limit alcohol intake;
  – avoid adding salt to food or using salty condiments, like extra hot sauce;
  – avoid snacking on fatty foods, like potato chips.

• Work with your doctor. If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure, your doctor can also prescribe medicine. Lifestyle changes alone don’t help. The medication may not make you feel any different, but it is important to continue taking the medication until your doctor tells you otherwise.

Healthy Weight, Healthy You
Not only is obesity a cause of high blood pressure, it is also a growing epidemic among adults and children. The Healthy Weight, Healthy You! program helps you and your family members achieve and maintain your ideal weight. To get started, you assess your current lifestyle by calculating your body mass index (BMI) and filling out the Personal Health Profile. Then we give you support to help improve your unhealthy behaviors. Once you lose the weight, we provide you with tools to keep it off, including:

• group support programs;
• one-on-one attention from a dietitian;
• informational support from our online resources.

Start by logging on to www.ibxpress.com and clicking on the Healthy Lifestyles tab. Then click on the Healthy Weight, Healthy You! link.
Get and stay fit with IBC

As an IBC member, take advantage of the incentives we offer to help make sure you lose weight and keep it off.

• Fitness reimbursement — We offer discounts on fitness center memberships and a reimbursement of up to $150 of your annual fitness center fees when you complete 120 workouts within a year.

• Nutrition counseling — Get six nutrition counseling visits with a registered network dietitian or network provider.

• Wellness reimbursement — You can receive up to $200 reimbursement if you participate in a wellness management program.

• Weight management — You can receive up to $200 reimbursement if you participate in a weight management program.

For more information, visit www.ibxpress.com or call 1-800-ASK-BLUE (1-800-275-2583).

* Online programs are not eligible for reimbursement.

Learn what you can do about controlling high blood pressure

Be smart about controlling high blood pressure

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