



## Spring 2024

### Health by the Numbers

Certain numbers can reveal things about you, like your age or your weight. While those don't always tell the full picture, they are guides to help evaluate your overall health. But there are two numbers that are very clear in their meaning – systolic and diastolic ... better known as blood pressure.

A healthy blood pressure reading is at or below 120/80 (systolic/diastolic). If your reading is above that, you are considered to have “pre-hypertension” or, if above 140/90, actual “hypertension”. If your blood pressure is not under control, there are many serious health issues that can result, including damage to your heart and blood vessels, and an increased risk of stroke among other issues.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Some signs that you may have elevated blood pressure can include headaches, confusion, fatigue, vision problems, chest pain, difficulty breathing, buzzing in the ears, and an irregular heartbeat.

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Henry Ford Physician Network

Jackson Health Network

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One good way to see if your blood pressure is within range is to evaluate it using home blood pressure readings. If you take the average of 8-10 home readings over the period of a week or so, it will be a good estimate of whether your blood pressure is normal. If it is determined that your blood pressure is elevated, you should see your physician and consider some of the other simple (though not always easy) steps to take.

- Exercise most days of the week and eat a healthy diet.
- As difficult as it is, quit smoking.
- Reduce stress through exercise, deep breathing, adding more fun to your life or eliminating stressors, if possible.
- Lower your cholesterol through eating a healthy diet and exercising.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Know if you have sleep apnea; if you do, seek treatment.

If your efforts to naturally lower your blood pressure do not affect your numbers enough, your provider may discuss medication to help you. Make sure you understand the reasons why a medication is being prescribed, any side effects and how quickly you can expect to see a difference. This can help avoid a common pitfall, as described by Henry Ford Cardiologist Shalini Modi, MD.

“It is very important to remember that if you are prescribed medication, it is crucial that you take it as directed,” said Dr. Modi. “If you have any hesitancy in taking the medication, please discuss this with your doctor at the appointment. They will be able to address your concerns right then so that you leave the appointment fully understanding the plan forward.”



## Nice to See You!

Virtual appointments with your provider can be wonderfully convenient, and they will remain part of the healthcare world for the foreseeable future. Still, there are advantages to seeing your provider in person, such as:

- **In-person visit benefits.** Many health screenings or facets of a physical exam cannot be done virtually such as bloodwork, accurate blood pressure readings (if you do not monitor at home), listening to your lungs, etc.
- **Change in health.** If you have a chronic condition or have had a change in your health over the last year, it is important to see your provider in person.
- **Body language.** By allowing your provider to see all of you – not just your face on a screen – they can better evaluate your health. Additionally, it helps to positively impact your connection with your provider.
- **Changing preferences.** Many providers are now expecting to see their patients in-person at least once a year; this can impact prescription renewals or referrals. Check with your provider regarding their virtual practices.

It is important to check with your doctor regarding which visit is better for you and your healthcare needs.

## Is your PCP of record correct?

Because your healthcare plan is considered to be a value-based contract, it is vital that your actual primary care provider (PCP) is listed in your records. Why is this so important? The “value” for you in this plan happens through careful attention to the care you receive. But sometimes the record of your actual provider doesn’t match what is listed in HAP.

**How does this happen?** HAP assigns each plan participant a PCP who is geographically close to their home address. This works well for plan participants who have not officially chosen a PCP. But often, participants have already selected a doctor of their choice, which is optimal.

**Action required:** Please take a moment now to confirm your preferred PCP is listed in your HAP records. Simply go to [www.hap.org](http://www.hap.org) and log in. Scroll down to see your name and the provider listed as your PCP. If this is not your chosen provider, simply click on Change PCP edit button and make the change. *Please note: before changing your provider, first check with HAP to confirm your provider is in your Plan’s network.* If you need help with this, HAP customer service can assist you. Just call 866-766-4709.

# De-stigmatizing Stigma: Seeking Help for Mental Health Concerns

Each day, thousands of people across the country live with an undiagnosed and untreated mental health issue such as depression or anxiety. Doree Ann Espiritu, MD, Henry Ford Health Medical Director for Behavioral Health Services (Outpatient Division), addresses many of the questions regarding mental health and why people do not seek help when needed.



## **Q. Why do some people not seek help even if they know they are struggling emotionally?**

A. "The stigma of depression and, really, any mental health issue, is the primary reason that 80% of these people do not speak up and seek help. Some people still believe that depression is a sign of weakness, or it's related to violence or criminality. These are harmful myths that also contribute to stigma. Many patients fear possible repercussions related to career advancement, employment discrimination, exclusion from social circles, judgement from a spouse/partner, etc. There is also self-stigma, where people living with depression believe they are not worthy of receiving help."

## **Q. Does untreated mental health illness affect overall health?**

A. "Those with serious mental illness often die decades earlier than they should, driven not by increased suicides or injuries, but poor physical health. We need to encourage them to talk about their stories, which will also help others to seek help."

## **Q. Do cultural barriers impact someone from seeking help?**

A. "Yes, they do. Also, the way people think about cure is also influenced by culture. Among Asian, Hispanic and African American communities, it is often believed that a mental illness can be treated or overcome through willpower, heroic stoicism, and avoidance of morbid thoughts rather than by seeking professional help."

## **Q. How can someone tell if their feelings of sadness/worry have become depression/anxiety?**

A. "Life events can trigger anxiety, depression, sadness, doubt, fear and other normal emotional reactions. If these emotions are starting to affect your ability to function, then it's a sign you need to reach out to someone. If you have thoughts about death or not wanting to be around anymore, then an emergency appointment with a mental health professional must happen."

## **Q. What are physical signs of an undiagnosed mental health issue?**

A. "Anxiety symptoms are mostly felt as chest pain, fast heart rate/palpitations, dizziness, high blood pressure. A lot of patients with panic attacks think they are suffering from a heart attack and go to the emergency room several times before they are diagnosed with a panic disorder. Depression can show as vague symptoms like low energy, poor concentration, poor appetite. These symptoms can be attributed to a medical problem like thyroid issues."

## **Q. What is the first step if you think you need help?**

A. "Speak to someone you can trust – your pastor, mentor, family member or your Primary Care Provider (PCP). I want to emphasize that PCPs are trained to evaluate patients for mental health concerns and are eager to help."

## **Q. If you can't get an appointment with your PCP, what can you do?**

A. "Through your healthcare plan, you can call the MyCare Advice Line (866.434.1372) and speak with a nurse. And remember, anyone can call 988 – a number that has been established to help those experiencing a mental health crisis."

## **Q. Is counseling and/or medication always part of any treatment plan?**

A. "It depends on the diagnosis, the severity of the symptoms and many other factors. For example, some people are reacting to a certain stressor and do not have a history of depression or anxiety. If the symptoms are mild and the patient's ability to function is not impaired, first treatment is usually counseling/talk therapy to help with coping skills. If symptoms are getting more severe, then medications can be prescribed by the patient's PCP or a psychiatrist."

## Change to Urgent Care Coverage

With your healthcare plan, it is important to know what services are covered at In-Network/Tier 1. Please make a note now that Urgent Care visits covered In-Network/Tier I must be at:

- One of the 16 southeast Michigan Henry Ford-GoHealth Urgent Care centers\*
- Any Jackson Health Network urgent care center (Jackson area)\*
- Genesis Health urgent care centers (Flint area)

By receiving urgent care outside of these facilities, you may incur a higher copay. If you are outside these service areas, you may still go to any urgent care facility, which will be covered at In-Network/Tier I. Because these facilities are connected to Henry Ford Health, you will also have the benefit of knowing your electronic medical record will be updated so that your Henry Ford affiliated provider can see the care you have received. This is very important to ensure continuity of care for you.

\* These sites can all be found at [www.henryford.com/sameday](http://www.henryford.com/sameday).

## Fun Fact

Feeling down or stressed? Try adding some music to your day!

According to an article in Harvard Health Publishing (part of Harvard Medical School), the use of music – listening to it or singing – can create significant improvements in mental health and even some improvements in physical health as it relates to quality of life.

So, ditch that true crime podcast on your next drive in to work and tune into some music that makes you feel good. Whether it's classical, 70s rock, jazz or Taylor Swift, listen to what lifts your spirits.



Visit your healthcare plan website at [www.henryford.com/YourHealthcarePlan](http://www.henryford.com/YourHealthcarePlan) or scan the QR code

## Important Phone Numbers

Concierge Team: 866.434.1369

MyCare Advice Line: 866.434.1372



1 Ford Place  
Detroit, MI 48202