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## How to Treat 3 Common Age-Related Health Conditions

Do all you can to live a healthier life

by OptumRx (Paid Content)



SHUTTERSTOCK

Along with wisdom and experience, certain health conditions – high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes – increase in adults 50+. These conditions result from changes in our bodies that are part of the natural aging process. Arming yourself with knowledge and good medical care can help you maintain your best health and prevent disease from advancing. Know the facts about these common health conditions. Take preventive measures now to live your healthiest life.

### High Blood Pressure or Hypertension

Blood vessels get less flexible as we age, putting pressure on the system that carries blood through your body. This increases the likelihood of heart attack and stroke. About two in three adults 50+ have high blood pressure. You can try controlling high blood pressure by eating a diet high in potassium and low in salt, with a balance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.

- Aim for between 90 and 150 minutes of aerobic activity each week – brisk walking, running, swimming, cycling and taking exercise classes. Limit alcohol. And always take your prescribed medications.

### High Cholesterol

Your body needs cholesterol to build healthy cells. However, when your cholesterol is higher than levels considered healthy, if not properly treated, your arteries may become blocked by fatty deposits. This puts you at an increased risk of heart disease, heart attack or stroke. While high cholesterol can be genetic, there are lifestyle changes that can help to reduce your cholesterol. Don't smoke. Limit trans fats found in processed foods and saturated fats found in animal products, like meat and full-fat dairy.

- Get regular exercise – about 30 minutes most days. And if you are prescribed medication to treat your high cholesterol, take as directed.

### Diabetes

This disease occurs when blood glucose or sugar levels are too high. If not treated properly, diabetes can lead to other health conditions like heart and kidney disease, as well as vision and nerve damage. Not smoking is critical. Physical activity should be part of your daily routine. What you eat, how much and when is important in controlling diabetes. Limit sweets, drink plenty of water, eat a balanced diet of heart-healthy fats that include foods like salmon, tuna and mackerel, nuts and seeds, avocado and olive oil. Make sure to include these food groups regularly – green vegetables, fruits like oranges and berries, along with whole grains, lean protein, non- or low-fat dairy.

- Talk to your doctor and follow your treatment plan, which could include prescribed medications to help regulate your insulin.

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It's empowering to do all you can to live a healthy life. Sometimes lifestyle changes can improve your health significantly. In addition to all the steps outlined above, do what you can to control stress – always a factor in good health. Take good care of yourself. If you have a condition that requires medication, make sure you follow your doctor's orders. You can get the best price on your drug prescriptions and doctor-prescribed over-the-counter medications by using AARP Prescription Discounts provided by OptumRx. Members save an average of 60% on all FDA-approved medications—brand-name and generic—not covered by your primary insurance or Medicare Part D.

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