

# CIRCULATORY

DISEASE MANAGEMENT NEWS



## Circulation



If you are trying to improve your health, one positive way to is make efforts to increase your circulation. Improving circulation helps to deliver oxygen and nutrient-rich blood to all parts of your body. This lowers your risk for a multitude of health issues, including muscle fatigue, a “pins and needles” sensation on your skin, cold and numb extremities, and chest pain.

You can improve your circulation in a variety of ways. The first way you can try to do this is to eat meals that support your heart health. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, lean animal protein and fish are key for heart healthy meals. In addition, they contribute to a healthier circulatory system by helping you lower your cholesterol. If you ever need help to find affordable, healthy foods, using MyPlate.gov is very helpful. This website is a great resource because it helps you plan your meal one bite at a time with specific information about each food group.

A second way to improve your circulation is being more active. Increasing movement not only improves your circulation but also lowers your blood pressure. Physical activity provides a lot of health benefits, but you do not have to complete high-intensity workouts to benefit. For example, walking, stretching, yoga, dancing and Tai Chi are all beneficial exercises. They do not require a great deal of exertion, and your circulatory system will still benefit from them. You can always aim to build your endurance up to more intense types of exercise as you get more comfortable.

Further, a third way to help with circulation can include managing stress. There are many ways to reduce stress. These include meditation, relaxation techniques and doing things you enjoy. Research suggests that even laughter can increase blood flow in your body. With a healthy diet, exercise and perhaps a little laughter, you will achieve better circulation for your everyday health!

*An important note about TRICARE program information: At the time of publication, this information is current. It is important to remember that TRICARE policies and benefits are governed by public law and federal regulations. Changes to TRICARE programs are continually made as public law and/or federal regulations are amended.*

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## VIRTUAL SUPPORT FROM YOUR DISEASE MANAGEMENT TEAM

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We are glad to give you support with printed materials and expert disease management clinicians. However, we would also like to help you stay healthy through free virtual support, which we offer in three exciting ways:

**Webinars:** We offer live webinars via computer and phone. Our live webinars bring you up-to-date information about medical subjects from our clinical experts through presentations and audio. After the online session, you will have a chance to ask questions of the clinician. Getting signed up for a free Zoom session is easy. Visit [HumanaMilitary.com/dmwebinars](https://HumanaMilitary.com/dmwebinars) to make your reservation today.

**Community groups:** These live sessions, conducted by our clinical experts, give disease management beneficiaries the support they need to stay healthy. For beneficiaries struggling with diabetes or depression/anxiety disorder, signing up is easy. Visit the group meetings calendar at [HumanaMilitary.com/dmwebinars](https://HumanaMilitary.com/dmwebinars)

**Web-based training:** On our disease management website, you will find videos about your disease and how to control it effectively. Available to you 24/7, these digital resources give you the knowledge you need to stay focused on your health. Please visit [HumanaMilitary.com/dm](https://HumanaMilitary.com/dm) to access this information.

We hope you will take advantage of these exciting tools to help you achieve your health and wellness goals.

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# Do you *really* know about blood pressure?

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

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Blood pressure is one of the vital signs checked at every medical visit. Your provider may have a medical assistant or nurse put a cuff that tightens around your wrist or upper arm to check your blood pressure.

Maybe your provider tells you your blood pressure is “fine” or maybe that it is borderline high. What does that mean?

Everyone is different and an individual needs to ask their own provider what blood pressure range is good for them. In general, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), a good range is usually less than 120 over 80 mmHg. Nearly half of American adults have high blood pressure or hypertension, per the CDC. Unfortunately, one may experience no sign or symptoms of high blood pressure. Thus, high blood pressure (hypertension) is sometimes called the silent killer.

The American Heart Association provides the above chart to manage High Blood Pressure (HBP).

The top number is the systolic blood pressure. This is the pressure of the blood flowing through your arteries during a heartbeat. The bottom number is the diastolic blood pressure. This is the pressure of the blood flowing through your arteries when your heart is at rest between heartbeats. Be sure to ask your provider what the appropriate range for your blood pressure, how often to check at home, and when to call them if needed.

Finally, make sure you take your blood pressure properly! Ask your provider if you need to check your blood



pressure lying down, sitting, standing or a combo of those. Make sure the cuff is not too big or small to get an accurate reading. Follow the instructions that come with your blood pressure device. Your arm with the blood pressure cuff needs to be supported at heart level. Try to relax for several minutes before measuring your blood pressure as well.

By routinely monitoring your blood pressure, you can catch things early if you start to see it elevate or lower, and call your doctor to avoid a hospital admission. Taking preventive measures now may help keep you healthy down the road and decrease your chances of future hospital stays and other health complications.

*(Chart: American Heart Association)*

# Caregiver burnout

If you are a caregiver for a loved one, you are not alone. According to the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, at least 17.1 million individuals in the US are family caregivers of someone age 65 and older. The caregivers list of activities can be long: organize and administer medications, schedule and provide transportation to medical visits, complete procedures such as blood sugar checks, daily weights and other daily necessities. Caregiving can be intense, physically, emotionally and even spiritually.

To be your best as a caregiver, first, take care of YOU! If you are not well, you certainly cannot continue to take care of others. Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or a member of a faith group to be with your loved one while you take a walk, read, consume healthy nutrition spend some time recharging. Research local caregiving resources that may be available at [findhelp.org](https://findhelp.org). Reach out to Military One Source for caregiving resources if you are an Active Duty Service Member (ADSM) or Active Duty Family Member (ADFM).



*(Sources: Caregiver stress | Office on Women's Health ([womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov)), Caring for Yourself When Caring for Another ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)), What Is Caregiver Burnout? ([heart.org](https://www.heart.org)), Resources for Caregivers | ([HHS.gov](https://www.HHS.gov)))*

## FROM THE CLINICIAN



Angela Ratzlaff has been a nurse with Humana Military's disease management program for three years. Her work history was caring for patients with heart attacks, strokes and heart failure. Cardiac and circulatory care became her passion. This led her career into supervision and case management, helping patients after a hospital stay.

Angela enjoys helping beneficiaries discover the many TRICARE resources available to them. [HumanaMilitary.com](https://www.HumanaMilitary.com) has education on diabetes, depression, hypertension, asthma and more. Beneficiaries can connect with people through scheduled webinars and community groups, or browse newsletters and other resources any time.

Working with a patient to find their specific needs, and how to best help them, is very rewarding for Angela. Her goal is to help others achieve their best health and well-being. She helps by finding health alternatives, making appointments and better understanding their treatment plan.

The thing that never changes for Angela is her drive to help each individual patient.

## THE DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Summer is here, and it's time to get out and sweat! The current epic heat wave is certainly worrisome, and when we sweat, we lose salt. So if you have a heart condition, should you be worried? No! Let's talk about salt. Too much salt is a bad thing, as is too little. But too little is rarely a problem, and it's easy to have too much, especially if you have a heart problem. Salt, or sodium chloride, causes your body to retain water, increasing your blood volume, and thus increasing your blood pressure. When your blood pressure increases, your heart has to work harder to circulate the blood throughout your body. When the heart works harder, it can increase in size, which is not good! This is why your provider will check your blood pressure at each visit. You typically will not feel any symptoms from your blood pressure being too high, and that's why it's so important to check it frequently.



*Dr. Joe McKeon*

If you have congestive heart failure, or have previously had a heart attack, too much salt can have almost immediate effects. The increased sodium you consumed increases the fluid in your body, and your heart cannot keep up with the increased demand. Elevating your feet can help (because the fluid follows gravity), but the key is to limit your salt intake. Eating fresh foods cooked without added salt are best. Try seasonings like "Mrs. DASH" that have spices and flavorings without salt. You will notice a little more energy, better breathing and may notice weight loss from losing the excess water! This newsletter has a delicious, low-salt recipe; try it this week!

So my take home message is, enjoy summer! Sweating is okay. Stay hydrated, but avoid salt. Water is not the enemy, salt is. Enjoy your loved ones, wear your sunscreen and leave that salt shaker in the cupboard.

*(Sources: How Blood Flows Through the Heart & Body (clevelandclinic.org))*



## FROM THE PATIENT



Beneficiary Melody\* has really enjoyed being in the disease management program. The experience has been beneficial for her health and her mental well-being, and her clinician is now a trusted voice in her life. Through the program, Melody has gained knowledge to improve her health and discovered a health advocate along the way.

Connecting with and speaking to an actual person has made a big difference in her life and approach to well-being. Melody\* now feels trust with her care providers and is more at ease. Each time she talks to her clinician, she gains confidence to live a happy, healthy life. Melody\* would recommend this program, stating that everyone needs someone to help them learn and improve in a caring way. This program has shown Melody\* how TRICARE can assist their well-being through support, guidance and education.

*\*Beneficiary's name was changed for privacy.*





## ASIAN-STYLE STEAMED SALMON

**Prep time:** 15 minutes  
**Cook time:** 10 minutes  
**Yield:** 4 servings  
**Serving size:** 3 oz salmon, ¼ C broth

### Ingredients:

- 1 C low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ C shiitake mushroom caps, rinsed and sliced (or substitute dried shiitake mushrooms)
- 2 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced (or 2 tsp ground)
- ¼ C scallions (green onions), rinsed and chopped
- 1 Tbsp lite soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp sesame oil (optional)
- 12 oz salmon fillet, cut into 4 portions (3 oz)

### Directions:

1. Combine chicken broth, mushroom caps, ginger, scallions, soy sauce and sesame oil (optional) in a large, shallow sauté pan. Bring to a boil over high heat, then lower heat and simmer for 2-3 minutes.
2. Add salmon fillets, and cover with a tight-fitting lid. Cook gently over low heat for 4-5 minutes or until the salmon flakes easily with a fork in the thickest part (to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F).
3. Serve one piece of salmon with ¼ cup of broth.

### Nutritional information (per serving):

Calories	175	Cholesterol	48 mg	Saturated fat	2 g
Total fat	9 g	Potassium	487 mg	Total fiber	1 g
Protein	19 g	Carbohydrates	4 g	Sodium	208 mg

*Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.*

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## Care management program

- Toll-free phone number: **(800) 881-9227**
- Find information at **[HumanaMilitary.com/MyAccess](https://www.humanamilitary.com/MyAccess)**



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## Resources



You are taking care of yourself. You scheduled your visit with your provider, and now they gave you a new diagnosis of a circulatory condition. Or, maybe you have been managing your diagnosis for years and you're experiencing a flare-up. Perhaps you are starting new medication or maybe you have been taking medication for some time and are interested in discovering new resources.

We at Humana Military are here to help!

Find resources at [HumanaMilitary.com/dm](https://www.humanamilitary.com/dm). Find newsletters and webinars for **behavioral health**, **circulatory conditions**, **diabetes** and **respiratory conditions**.

You can also call Humana Military's Disease Management team and ask to work with a clinician specifically on your circulatory condition. You can talk with a professional to set up health goals and better manage your condition together.

Don't forget to routinely check in with your provider and take all medications as instructed. By using all of our resources, you can look forward to a healthier you!

