



Pharmacist Pocket Guide

Team up to help your patients
manage diabetes & hypertension.



**You are a
key member of
the health care
team for people
with chronic
conditions such
as hypertension
and diabetes.**

Numerous studies have shown that patients can achieve significant improvements in controlling their blood pressure and diabetes by expanding their health care team to include pharmacists. You can use your knowledge and skills to help them reduce their risk of heart attack and stroke and live better, healthier lives.

Often, these brief discussions—whether during the first visit or at follow-ups—will help your patients feel more at ease and prompt them to ask additional questions about their condition.

Here are some easy ways you can team up with your patients to help control their hypertension and diabetes:



Start a relationship. Get to know your patients so you can determine their levels of awareness about hypertension. Ask simple questions such as, “Do you have questions about your prescription(s)?” to help you judge if patients understand their condition, risks, and the importance of medication adherence.



Talk about their medication(s). As you know, hypertensive patients tend to be on more than one drug. Talk about the unique role each drug plays, and the importance of taking them as directed and getting refills on time. If your patients have adherence issues, understand why and suggest they use a reminder aid or a pillbox to organize their medication(s). Inform patients of any possible side effects. If they’re experiencing side effects, suggest ways to manage symptoms, and encourage them to speak directly with their doctor to see if they need changes in treatment. Emphasize the dangers of not taking medications exactly as prescribed without talking to you or their doctor first.



Discuss a plan for patients to regularly monitor blood pressure. Make sure patients know their blood pressure goals and suggest they regularly monitor their blood pressure. Recommend they get at-home monitoring equipment or use your pharmacy in-store monitoring device (if available). Suggest that the patient check blood pressure twice per day for at least a week—once in the morning before they take their medication(s) and once in the evening—and log that information in the *Team Up. Pressure Down.* blood pressure journal. Offer to review their blood pressure results during their next visit to see if the medication is working correctly.



Educate patients about helpful lifestyle changes. Talk about how a low-sodium diet, exercise, weight loss, and limiting alcohol can help lower blood pressure and protect the heart. Ask about current lifestyle behaviors, such as smoking, that are major risk factors for hypertension. Offer additional counsel and resources such as the DASH eating plan and getting at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of exercise each week to help patients stay on track.



Keep it simple but direct. When offering counsel, keep things simple. Avoid unnecessary details or medical terms that can cause confusion.



**To learn more about other ways
you can team up to get your patients'
blood pressure down, visit:**

<http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>



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