



## Hypertension: When Are Medications Needed?

Blood pressure medications reduce risk and save lives, but they work best when paired with lifestyle changes. Medication isn't failure—it's protection while root causes are addressed. The goal is long-term prevention of organ damage, not short-term number control. Knowing when medication is appropriate prevents both delay and overtreatment.

Medications lower blood pressure by reducing vascular resistance, decreasing blood volume, or lowering heart rate. However, they do not correct insulin resistance, chronic stress activation, or poor sleep that drive ongoing pressure elevation. Lifestyle interventions improve the upstream physiology that medication cannot fully address.

Lab patterns and clinical indicators such as kidney function (creatinine/eGFR), microalbuminuria, and evidence of heart strain (LVH) can guide urgency. Over time, uncontrolled hypertension leads to progressive arterial stiffness, kidney decline, and stroke risk even when symptoms are absent.

Clinically, early treatment prevents irreversible damage. Combining medication with lifestyle often reduces the number of drugs required and improves long-term outcomes.

### 01 FOR EXAMPLE

A 58-year-old has consistent readings of 160/96 but feels "fine," so they delay treatment. Over time, labs show declining eGFR and imaging reveals mild heart thickening. Once medication is started, readings improve quickly, but lifestyle drivers (processed food, stress, poor sleep) remain. When those drivers are addressed, medication doses stabilize and long-term risk decreases. The key lesson: medication prevents damage while lifestyle repairs the cause.

### 02 Try This Today

**Measure:** Track BP trends (weekly averages), not single readings

**Do:** If readings are consistently  $\geq 140/90$ , schedule a medical review this month

**Reflect:** Reframe medication as risk reduction, not personal failure

Select a plan:

<https://tinyurl.com/healthyu-amaze>

