



HBLA
Healthy Brain LA

The **Heart-Brain** Connection

Social Media Toolkit

v. December 2023

Background

In 2020, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention launched Healthy Brain LA (HBLA). HBLA aims to raise awareness and promote knowledge about dementia*, especially among communities most impacted by these conditions.

**Dementia is a term used to describe the progressive loss of cognitive abilities that impacts a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Dementia can be caused by a variety of conditions including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal degeneration, mixed dementia, to name a few.¹*

About this Toolkit

The purpose of this social media toolkit is to help you raise awareness within your community and networks about the association between heart health and brain health, emphasizing the role of high blood pressure, a known risk factor for both heart disease and dementia.²

Messaging and graphics in this toolkit aim to represent Los Angeles County's diverse population and the communities at the highest risk for developing high blood pressure, heart disease, and dementia. Topics selected for this toolkit were informed, in part, by community listening sessions held across the County with people with cognitive decline, older adults aged 65 years and older, and caregivers.³ [Access the report here.](#)

The toolkit features:

- Information about the connection between heart and brain health
- Facts about high blood pressure and dementia in the United States and Los Angeles County
- Social media sample messaging, images, and videos
- Additional resources

How are heart health and brain health related?

Heart health and brain health are closely related. The heart and brain are two of the most important organs in the body and rely on each other to function properly. The heart pumps blood to the brain, providing it with the oxygen and nutrients it needs to support optimal cognitive functions, which include memory, attention, language, and problem-solving abilities. The risk factors that affect heart health, such as high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, diabetes, and smoking, can also have a significant impact on the brain.

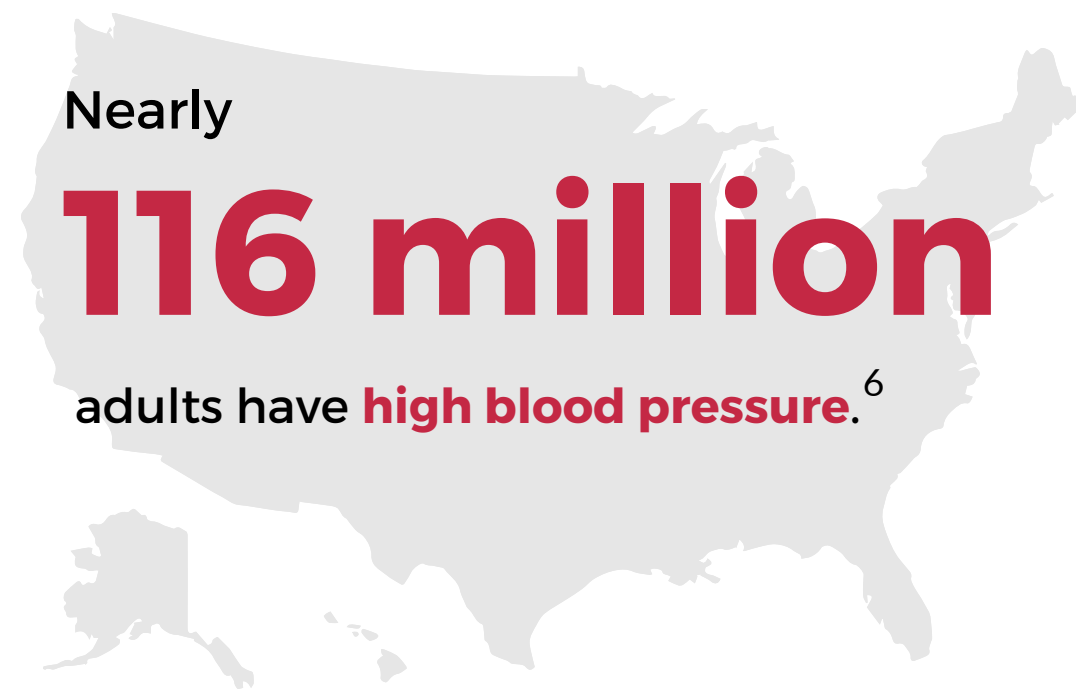
Poor heart health, such as uncontrolled high blood pressure during midlife (ages 45 to 64), can increase the risk of developing dementia later in life.² In particular, high blood pressure is a significant risk factor for vascular dementia as it can damage blood vessels and affect the blood supply to the brain.^{4,5}

However, there are a number of lifestyle changes that can promote good heart and brain health. Some of these lifestyle changes include maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular exercise, not smoking, getting enough sleep, and regularly monitoring and controlling blood pressure.² Additionally, managing chronic conditions such as diabetes and high cholesterol can support heart and brain health.

Know the Facts

High Blood Pressure & Dementia

In the United States



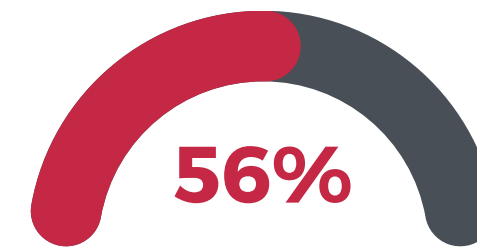
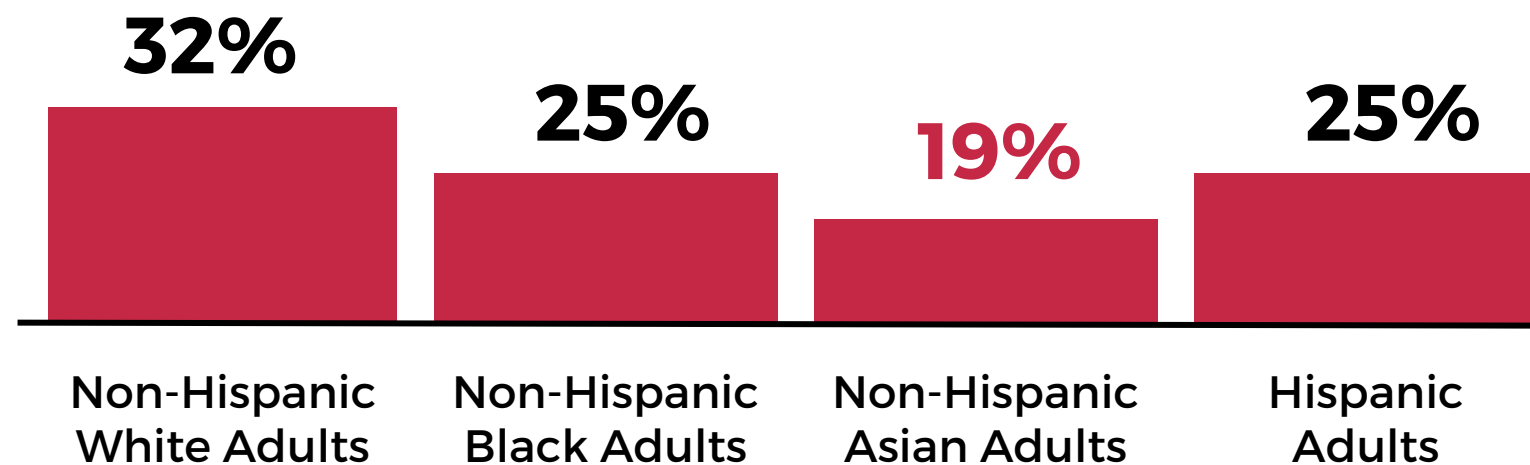
About

1 in 3

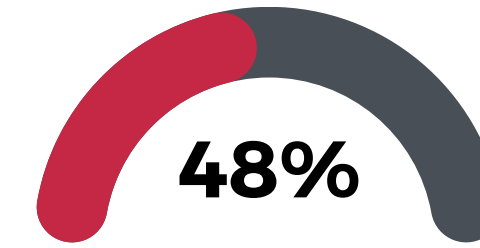
adults with **high blood pressure** aren't aware they have it and are not being treated for their condition.⁷

High blood pressure is more common among Non-Hispanic Black adults than other racial and ethnic minorities.⁶

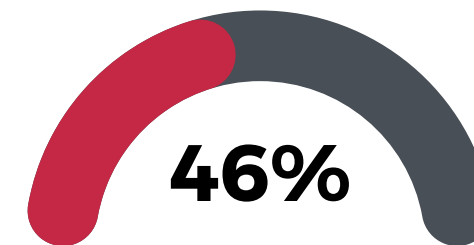
Among those who are recommended to take blood pressure medication, fewer non-Hispanic Asian adults have their blood pressure under control.⁶



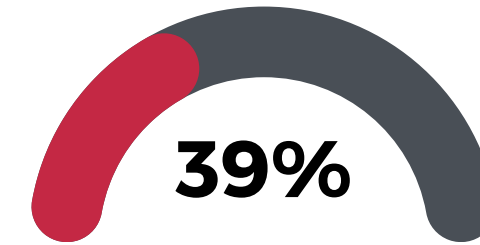
Non-Hispanic Black Adults



Non-Hispanic White Adults

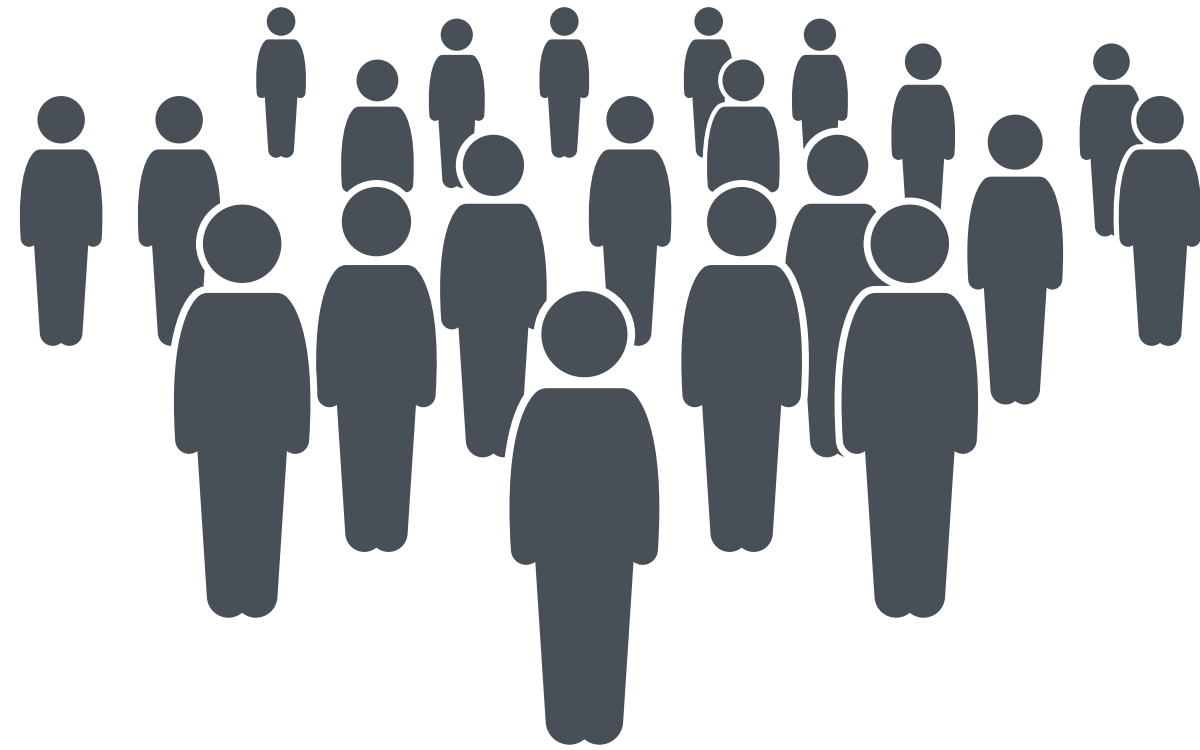


Non-Hispanic Asian Adults



Hispanic Adults

In the United States



An estimated

6.7 million

adults aged 65 and older are living with **Alzheimer's dementia** in 2023.⁹



Non-Hispanic Black older adults are

two times

more likely to develop **Alzheimer's or other dementias** than White older adults.⁸



Hispanic older adults are

one and a half times

more likely to develop **Alzheimer's or other dementias** than White older adults.⁸

In Los Angeles County

An estimated

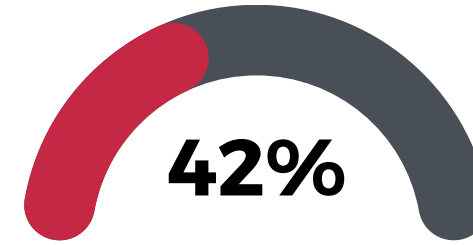
1.7 million

adults have **high blood pressure** and less than half have their condition under control.⁹

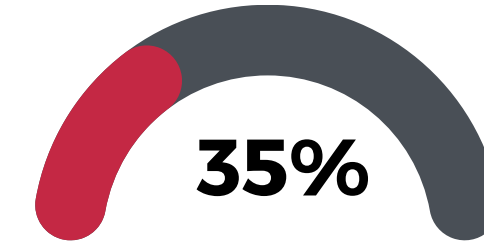
An estimated

166,000

adults aged 65 and older were living with **Alzheimer's disease** in 2019.¹¹



Black/African American Adults



American Indian/Alaska Native American Adults

Black/African American and American Indian/Alaska Native adults aged 18 and older have the highest rates of **high blood pressure** in Los Angeles County.¹⁰

Between 2019 and 2040, the number of older adults living with Alzheimer's disease is projected to increase significantly, especially among Latino older adults.¹¹

Race/Ethnicity	2019	2040	% Change
Non-Latino White/Caucasian	72,055	142,764	98%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	31,245	68,225	118%
Black/African American	13,962	35,341	153%
Other	2,173	6,072	179%
Latino	47,422	152,980	223%

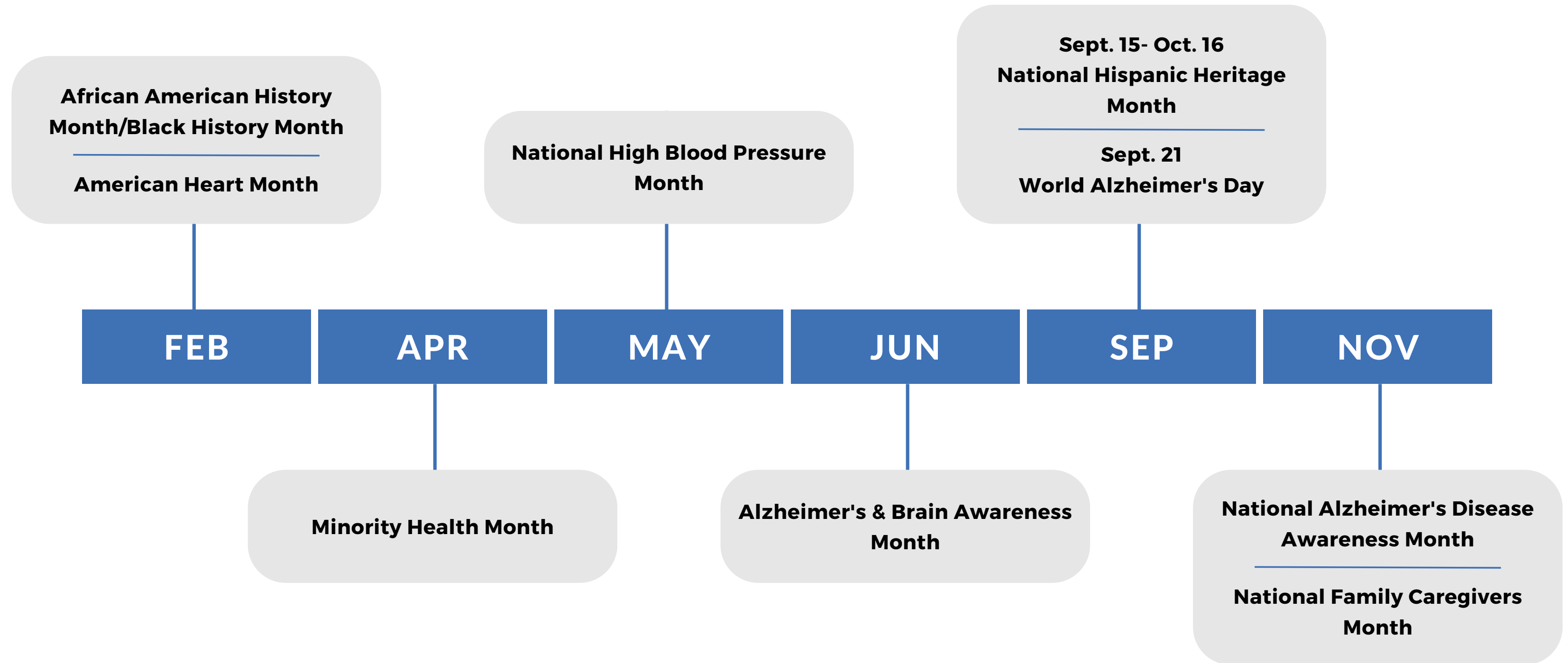
Quick Tips



Quick Tips

- Use images, GIFs, and videos to increase engagement with your posts.
- Ensure that your images reflect the community you are sharing the information to.
- Whenever available, provide alt text to ensure your content is accessible to low or no vision individuals.
- When posting content on X (formerly known as Twitter), keep posts limited to 280 characters.
- Tag us @ChooseHealthLA and use #HealthyBrainLA so we can engage with your content.
- Use hashtags to boost engagement:
 - #BrainHeartConnection
 - #bloodpressure
 - #HeartBrainConnection
 - #TakeBrainHealthtoHeart
 - #BrainHealth

Consider aligning messaging to relevant holidays and health observances throughout the year that can help bolster awareness and engagement.



Social Media Content



Sample Social Media Posts

The following social media posts were designed using plain language and health literacy strategies to convey clear and concise messaging. Feel free to tailor posts so that messaging resonates with your intended audience.

The toolkit features sample messaging and images related to 3 topic areas:

- Education and Awareness
- Lifestyle Changes
- High Blood Pressure and Dementia

Education and Awareness



Sample Messaging

Post Copy - English

High blood pressure usually doesn't have warning signs. Regularly measuring your blood pressure at home can help detect any potential issues early on. Don't wait until it's too late. Start monitoring your blood pressure today! #HealthyBrainLA

Why is blood pressure such a big deal? Uncontrolled high blood pressure can increase your risk of having a stroke and vascular dementia. Get regular blood pressure screenings and discuss your numbers with a doctor. #HealthyBrainLA

Are you measuring blood pressure correctly? Make sure you sit quietly with feet flat on the floor for at least 5 minutes before measuring. Don't exercise, drink caffeine or alcohol, or smoke 30 minutes before a reading. #HealthyBrainLA

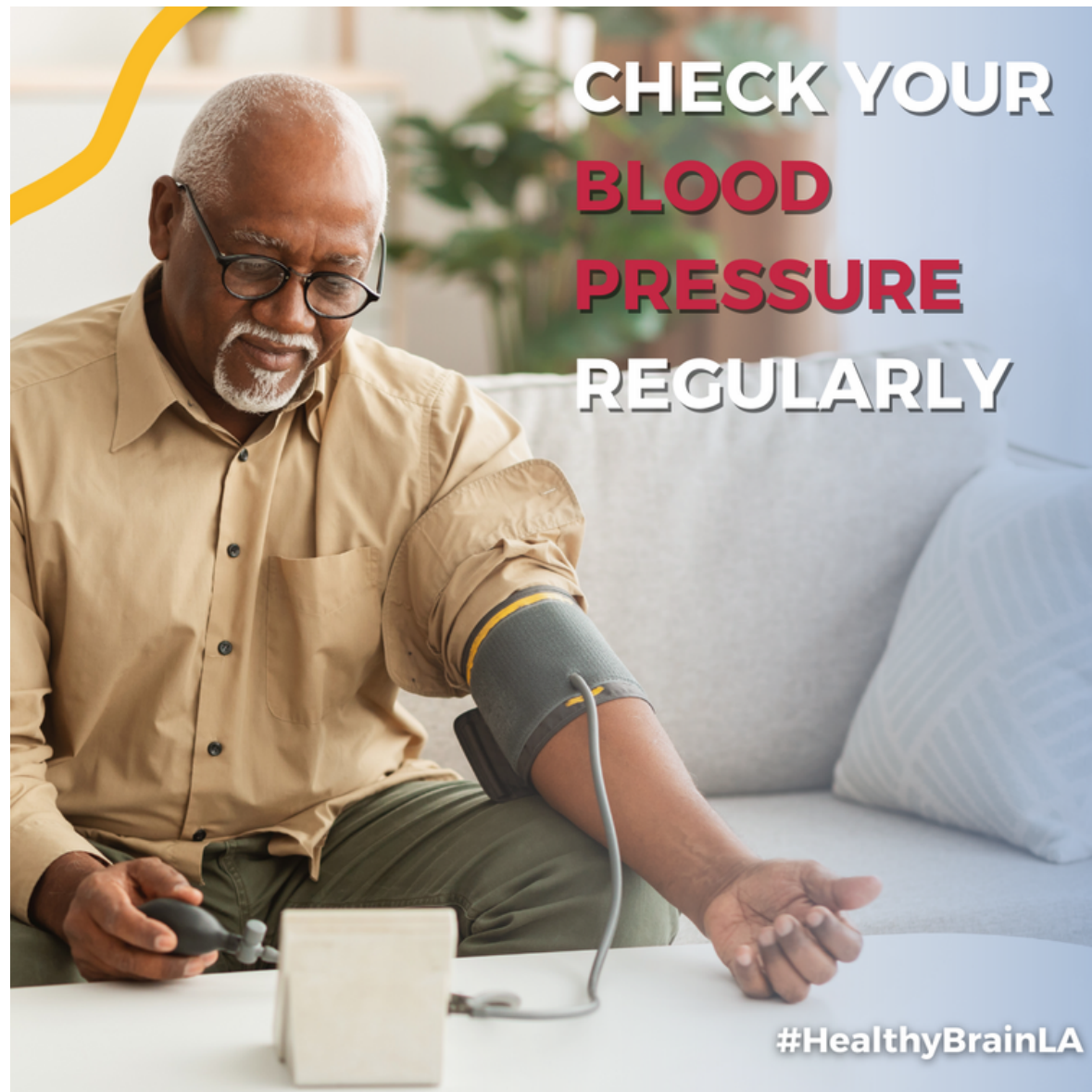
Post Copy - Spanish

La presión arterial alta generalmente no presenta síntomas de advertencia. Medir regularmente tu presión arterial en casa puede ayudar a detectar problemas temprano. No esperes hasta que sea demasiado tarde. ¡Empieza a monitorear tu presión arterial hoy! #HealthyBrainLA

¿Por qué es tan importante la presión arterial? La presión arterial no controlada puede aumentar tu riesgo de sufrir un derrame cerebral o desarrollar demencia vascular. Asegúrate de revisar tu presión arterial a menudo y habla con tu médico sobre los resultados. #HealthyBrainLA

¿Estás midiendo correctamente tu presión arterial? Asegúrate de sentarte en silencio con los pies planos sobre el suelo al menos 5 minutos antes de medir tu presión. No hagas ejercicio, no bebas café ni alcohol, y no fumes 30 minutos antes de medir. #HealthyBrainLA

Enhance your post copy messaging with images. Visit bit.ly/3MeaOZE to download these images and view more options.



Alt text: Older adult man measuring his blood pressure while sitting on a couch at home. Check your blood pressure regularly. #HealthyBrainLA



Alt text: Una mujer de tercera edad midiendo su presión arterial en casa. Revisa tu presión arterial regularmente. #HealthyBrainLA

Lifestyle Changes



Sample Messaging

Post Copy - English

Take control of your blood pressure by making positive lifestyle changes. Whether it's cooking meals with less salt or staying active, every little bit helps. Your heart and brain health are worth the effort! #HealthyBrainLA

Looking for a tasty way to lower your blood pressure? Add more potassium-rich vegetables like taro root and avocado to your diet. These veggies can help remove excess sodium from the body and keep your blood pressure in check. #HealthyBrainLA

Your brain health matters! Protect it by getting good sleep, managing your blood pressure, and keeping your cholesterol in check. Adopt positive lifestyle changes today to protect your brain health in the future. #HealthyBrainLA

Post Copy - Spanish

Toma control de tu presión arterial con cambios positivos en tu estilo de vida. Ya sea cocinando con menos sal o mantenerse activo, cada acción ayuda. ¡Tu salud del corazón y del cerebro valen el esfuerzo! #HealthyBrainLA

¿Buscas una forma deliciosa de reducir tu presión arterial? Agrega más verduras ricas en potasio como los aguacates y las espinacas a tu dieta. Estas verduras pueden ayudar a eliminar el exceso de sodio del cuerpo y mantener tu presión arterial bajo control. #HealthyBrainLA

¡Tu salud cerebral es importante! Durmiendo bien, controlando tu presión arterial y manteniendo tu colesterol bajo control puede proteger tu salud cerebral. Adopta cambios positivos en tu estilo de vida hoy para proteger la salud de tu cerebro en el futuro. #HealthyBrainLA

Enhance your post copy messaging with images. Visit bit.ly/3MeaOZE to download these images and view more options.



Alt text: Smiling middle-aged couple standing with their bicycles outside. Small changes can make a big impact. #HealthyBrainLA



Alt text: Tres mujeres de mediana edad sonriendo mientras caminan con pesas de ejercicio afuera. Acciones pequeñas generan gran impacto #HealthyBrainLA

High Blood Pressure and Dementia



Sample Messaging

Post Copy - English

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can damage the blood vessels in the body, including the ones in the brain. This can cause serious health problems, such as vascular dementia. Talk to your doctor and learn how you can keep your blood pressure under control. #HealthyBrainLA

Vascular dementia is the second most common form of dementia. It happens when the blood vessels that bring blood to the brain get damaged. This can be caused by high blood pressure or stroke. You can keep your brain healthy by controlling your blood pressure. #HealthyBrainLA

Studies show that managing high blood pressure in your 40s and 50s can help protect against dementia later in life. Get your blood pressure checked regularly and take steps to keep it under control. #HealthyBrainLA

Post Copy - Spanish

La presión arterial alta no controlada puede dañar los vasos sanguíneos del cuerpo, incluyendo los del cerebro. Esto puede causar problemas de salud, como la demencia vascular. Habla con tu médico y aprende cómo puedes mantener tu presión arterial bajo control. #HealthyBrainLA

La demencia vascular es la segunda forma más común de demencia. Ocurre cuando los vasos sanguíneos que llevan sangre al cerebro se dañan y puede ser causado por la presión arterial alta. Mantenga tu cerebro saludable controlando tu presión arterial. #HealthyBrainLA

Estudios muestran que controlando la presión arterial alta en los 40 y 50 años puede ayudar a proteger contra la demencia en la tercera edad. Revisa regularmente tu presión arterial y toma medidas para mantenerla bajo control. #HealthyBrainLA

Enhance your post copy messaging with images. Visit bit.ly/3MeaOZE to download these images and view more options.



Alt text: A doctor wearing a hijab measures the blood pressure of a young woman wearing a hijab with a cuff and stethoscope. Make your heart and brain health a top priority. #HealthyBrainLA

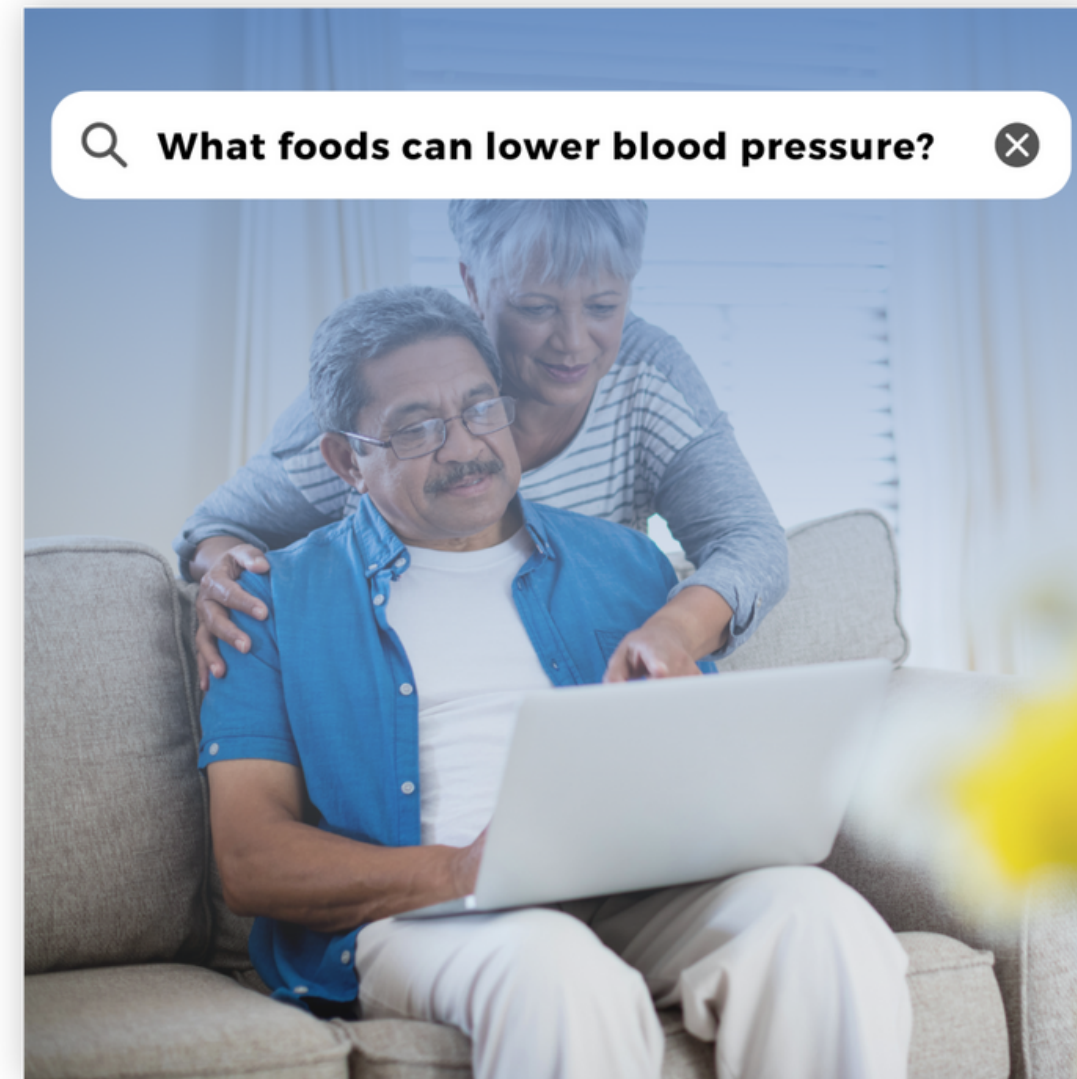


Alt text: Una pareja de mediana edad sonriendo mientras están parados enfrente de un lago. Da prioridad a la salud de tu corazón y cerebro. #HealthyBrainLA

Videos



Enhance your post copy messaging with videos. To download these videos, visit bit.ly/3MeaOZE.



Additional Resources



Below are some additional resources you can share with your communities and networks. To download these resources visit bit.ly/3MeaOZE.

BRAIN HEALTH BEGINS WITH YOUR HEART

Did you know that taking care of your heart can protect your brain?
Your heart and brain health are connected. The heart pumps blood through vessels that reach every part of your body, including your brain. These vessels carry the oxygen and energy your brain needs to learn, think, and remember. Health conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes can make it harder for the heart to pump blood to your brain. Reduced blood flow to the brain can put you at risk for Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia.

HEALTHY HABITS FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Here are some helpful habits to keep your heart and brain healthy:

- Add more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to your plate.
- Find ways to move your body more, like taking a dance class.
- Get at least seven hours of sleep every night.
- Schedule regular checkups with your doctor.
- Take your medicines for high blood pressure and diabetes, even if you feel good.
- Measure your blood pressure at home and share your numbers with your doctor.

[Available in English](#)

Are you worried about your Brain Health or Memory?

BrainGuide offers free memory questionnaires

Hold your smartphone camera over this QR Code so that it is clearly visible and visit BrainGuide today.

About BrainGuide
*BrainGuide includes free, easy to access, confidential memory questionnaires – taken over the phone or online in English or Spanish. You can take the questionnaire for yourself or someone you care about. Once you complete the questionnaire, BrainGuide will send you tailored resources based on your answers to help you find the best next steps in your brain health journey.
We know that first steps can be tough; BrainGuide can help you take them with confidence.

Find Resources for You

- ✓ Tips for a healthy brain
- ✓ Signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease
- ✓ Screening, detection and diagnosis
- ✓ Living with Alzheimer's disease
- ✓ Caregiving
- ✓ Local support
- ✓ Brain health equity

Take your first step today
MyBrainGuide.org | 855-BRAIN-411 (855-272-4641)
*BrainGuide was created with in-kind and financial support from Biogen

[Available in English](#)

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. It's measured in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).

High blood pressure (HBP) means the pressure in your arteries is higher than it should be. Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)	and	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

Blood pressure is written as two numbers, such as 112/78 mm Hg. The top, or larger, number (called systolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart beats. The bottom, or smaller, number (called diastolic pressure) is the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

Normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mm Hg. If you're an adult and your systolic pressure is 120 to 129, and your diastolic pressure is less than 80, you have elevated blood pressure. High blood pressure is a systolic pressure of 130 or higher, or a diastolic pressure of 80 or higher, that stays high over time.

High blood pressure usually has no signs or symptoms. That's why it is so dangerous. But it can be managed.

Nearly half of the American population over age 20, has HBP, and many don't even know it. Not treating high blood pressure is dangerous. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly and treat it the way your health care professional advises.

Am I at higher risk of developing HBP?
There are risk factors that increase your chances of developing HBP. Some you can control, and some you can't.

Those that can be controlled are:

- Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke
- Diabetes
- Being obese or overweight
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy diet (high in sodium, low in potassium, and drinking too much alcohol)
- Physical inactivity

Factors that can't be modified or are difficult to control are:

- Family history of high blood pressure
- Race/ethnicity
- Increasing age
- Gender (males)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Obstructive sleep apnea

Socioeconomic status and psychosocial stress are also risk factors for HBP. These can affect access to basic living needs, medication, health care professionals, and the ability to adopt lifestyle changes.

(continued)

[Available in English & Spanish](#)

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HBLA

Healthy Brain LA

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/healthybrainla

X (formerly Twitter): @ChooseHealthLA #HealthyBrainLA

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