

The slide features the American Heart Association logo and 'EmPOWERED to Serve™' text on the left, and the Anthem Foundation logo on the right. The main title is 'MANAGING YOUR CHRONIC CONDITIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC' in large, bold, black letters. Below the title is the hashtag '#EmPOWERChange'. At the bottom left, there is a statement of support from Anthem Foundation and a copyright notice. On the right side of the slide, there is a large, stylized graphic of a heart with a white flame-like shape inside it, set against a red background.

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Foundation

# MANAGING YOUR CHRONIC CONDITIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

#EmPOWERChange

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Ask the group:

- Do you know someone who had COVID-19 or is at high risk?
- What are high risk factors for COVID-19?

Review the information on the slide.

Before the next slide, ask the group:

- Do you think chronic conditions is a health issue for multicultural communities?

## MANAGING YOUR CHRONIC CONDITIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC | Lesson Overview

### Welcome

- What is EmPOWERED to Serve™?
- Program Topic and Urgent Community Need

### Health Lesson:

#### *Managing Your Chronic Conditions During the COVID-19 Pandemic*

- Practicing self-monitoring at home
- Going back to your doctor
- Consider getting the vaccine

### Closing Thoughts

- Call to Action

Get everyone focused by reading through the lesson overview.

Let participants know that the lesson takes 30 minutes to complete.

## WHAT IS EMPOWERED TO SERVE?

EmPOWERED to Serve is a movement inspiring those who are passionate about driving change through health justice in their communities.

We are catalysts for change, empowering the equity equation.

Learn More at [EmPOWEREDtoServe.org](https://EmPOWEREDtoServe.org).



**AHA's Mission Statement:**  
To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

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Read the introduction to ETS.

Share why you joined the ETS movement.

Encourage anyone who has not joined ETS to go online after the program and sign up for this national movement.

Note that ETS is a platform of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association and works in partnership with community organizations across the country.

## URGENT COMMUNITY NEED

- Managing your chronic conditions is always important, but even more so during this pandemic.
- Data shows underlying conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes disproportionately impact Black and Hispanic/Latino people.
- Nearly half of adults in the U.S. have high blood pressure — a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke and complications from COVID-19.



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Also, older adults are more likely to have severe illness, with more than 90% of COVID-19-related deaths occurring in people 45 years and older.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

**After today, you will be able to share with family and friends:**

- Information to help understand your chronic conditions
- How chronic conditions can put you at higher risk for severe COVID-19 symptoms
- Things you can do to manage these chronic conditions at home



Share that today's program is about understanding the importance of managing your chronic conditions during this pandemic and how to control high blood pressure.

Back to our lesson—we are going to learn about:

- Information to help understand chronic conditions.
- How chronic conditions can put you at higher risk for severe COVID-19 symptoms.
- Things you can do to help control blood pressure and manage these conditions at home.

## WHAT UNDERLYING CONDITIONS PUT ME AT RISK OF COVID-19?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults with underlying conditions such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, hypertension, or type 1 or type 2 diabetes are at a much higher risk of getting extremely sick from COVID-19.

Learning how to identify and self-monitor these conditions is important to taking control of your health and reducing your risk for COVID-19 and heart disease.



Review the information on the slide.

For the purpose of today's presentation we will be discussing in detail two of these conditions in more detail.

## WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE ?

When your heart beats, it pumps blood into your blood vessels. This creates pressure against the blood vessel walls. This blood pressure causes your blood to flow to all parts of your body. High blood pressure is when your blood pressure is consistently too high.

Nearly half of adults in the U.S. have high blood pressure, or hypertension, which is consistent readings of 130/80 mm Hg or above.



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First, let's define high blood pressure.

In case you get asked the difference between arteries and veins:

- Arteries are blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich, bright red blood away from the heart to nourish all parts of the body.
- Veins are blood vessels that carry oxygen-depleted, bluish blood toward the heart.

## HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE

### Blood Pressure Categories



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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[heart.org/bplevels](http://heart.org/bplevels)



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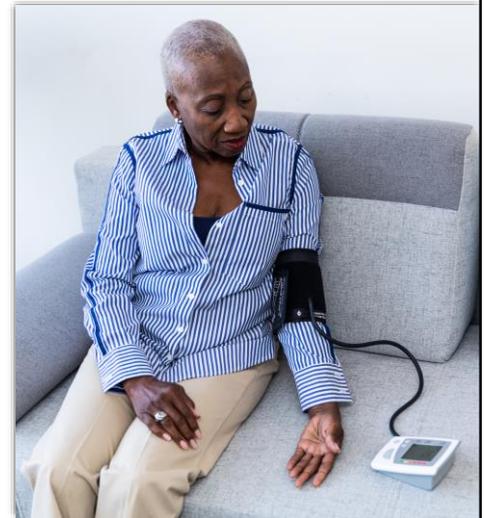
Review the information on the slide.



## **POINT 1: Monitor and measure your blood pressure at home**

### **Monitoring your blood pressure at home is important to controlling it.**

Self-monitoring, along with a physician-recommended treatment plan including lifestyle changes and, if needed, prescription medication, can help you manage your high blood pressure.



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Emphasize the point that heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and obesity are serious diseases that can seriously impact our lives. And that these diseases affect people in multicultural communities at higher rates.

## RECOGNIZE A BLOOD PRESSURE EMERGENCY

A hypertensive crisis occurs when blood pressure rises quickly to readings of 180/120 mm Hg or higher. If other symptoms occur — such as chest or back pain, numbness or weakness, loss of vision, or difficulty breathing or speaking — call 911.

Don't hesitate to reach out to your doctor.

To learn more about self-monitoring at home, consider participating in our health lesson module [Control Your Blood Pressure | EmPOWERED To Serve.](#)



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## UNDERSTANDING HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

High blood sugar is another condition you can manage at home. Nearly 26 million adults in the U.S. have type 2 diabetes and many don't know it. The first step is to understand what makes blood sugar levels rise and how it correlates to diabetes.

- **Glucose:** The carbohydrates and sugars in food and drinks turn into glucose (sugar) in the small intestine and digestive system. Glucose can then enter the bloodstream.
- **Insulin:** The hormone is made in the pancreas and helps the body's cells take up glucose from blood and lower blood sugar levels.



Review the information on the slide.

## **POINT 1: Monitor and measure your blood sugar at home**

There are two types of diabetes:

**Type 1 diabetes** develops when the body's immune system attacks and destroys cells that make insulin in the pancreas. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin or medication daily.

In **type 2 diabetes**, glucose builds up in the blood instead of going into cells because:

- The body develops "insulin resistance" and can't use the insulin it makes efficiently.
- The pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce insulin.

The result can be a high blood glucose level.

Review the information on the slide.

## POINT 1: Monitor and measure your blood sugar at home

Type 2 diabetes is most common, about 90-95% of cases, and can often be controlled with diet and exercise.

If you're diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you will also need to monitor your blood sugar level regularly. This can be done at home with a glucose monitor.

You can find more information and resources at: [heart.org/Diabetes](https://heart.org/Diabetes).

Fasting Blood Glucose	Diagnosis	What It Means
Lower than 100 mg/dl	Normal	Healthy range
100 to 125 mg/dl	Prediabetes (Impaired Fasting Glucose)	At increased risk of developing diabetes
126 mg/dl or higher	Diabetes Mellitus (type 2 diabetes)	At increased risk of heart disease or stroke

Do you know someone with diabetes or high blood sugar?

Do you know if diabetes or high blood sugar runs in your family?

## NON-MODIFIABLE RISKS

Understanding these risk factors can help you be more aware of how likely you are to develop high blood pressure and high blood sugar.

- Family history
- Increased age
- Male gender
- Race
- Chronic conditions



**Family history:** If your parents or other close blood relatives have high blood pressure, there's an increased chance that you'll get it, too.

- **Age:** The older you are, the more likely you are to get high blood pressure.
- **Gender:** Until age 64, men are more likely to get high blood pressure than women are. At 65 and older, women are more likely to get high blood pressure.
- **Race:** As we discussed earlier, African Americans tend to develop high blood pressure more often than people of any other racial background in the United States. It also tends to be more severe and some medications are less effective in treating HBP in African Americans.
- **Chronic kidney disease:** HBP may occur as a result of kidney disease. And, having HBP may also cause further kidney damage.



## MODIFIABLE RISKS

**You can change these risk factors to help prevent and manage high blood pressure and high blood sugar.**

- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet
- Being overweight or obese
- Drinking too much alcohol
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking and tobacco use
- Stress



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Say - Take these small steps to big changes. Start with one or two.

## **POINT 2:** It's important to go back to your doctor.

- Some people may have avoided routine checkups with their doctors during the pandemic.
- But it's important to take control of your health and prioritize your well-being.
- Take the first step and call your doctor's office to schedule an appointment. Be sure to ask about in-office safety precautions so you're prepared for your visit.



Review the information on the slide.

## **POINT 2:** Consider telehealth visits with your doctor

- Physicians' offices are still offering Telehealth visits for those who would rather see their doctor from home.
- Telehealth is a way to see your doctor virtually on your phone, computer, tablet, etc. Many medications can be prescribed through Telehealth as well.
- Call your doctor to see if they offer Telehealth visits and if that would be a good fit for you.



Emphasize that telehealth can be set up on your mobile device and is a safe and easy way to continue your routine visits.

### **POINT 3:** Consider getting the vaccine

- People with cardiovascular risk factors, diabetes, heart disease or a history of heart attack or stroke are at highest risk of developing complications from COVID-19.
- Getting the vaccine is safe, effective and can also protect those around you.
- For more information regarding the vaccine visit [heart.org/coronavirus](https://heart.org/coronavirus)



With the new Delta variant spreading, it's especially important to consider getting the vaccine to protect yourself and others.

## CALL TO ACTION

- Whether it is self-monitoring at home or receiving the vaccine, managing your chronic conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic is important to your overall health.
- You can begin taking these suggested steps to help put you and your health first.



Engage the group about lifestyle changes—ask:

What would you find most difficult to do to control your blood pressure?

What steps will you take to begin seeing your doctor again?

How will you EmPOWER yourself to commit to protecting yourself during this pandemic?



## CONTINUE SEEING YOUR DOCTOR

- Talk to your doctor about rescheduling appointments you postponed during the pandemic and start putting your health first.
- Remember, if you're not comfortable with an in-person visit, see if telehealth could be the right fit for you.





## BE PREPARED

- If you're taking prescription medication for chronic conditions, check with your doctor and pharmacy to see if you can get a larger supply so you don't have to visit the drug store as frequently.
- Mail-order prescriptions might also help you stock up and/or stay in.





## PREVENTION IS THE BEST DEFENSE

- If you have high blood pressure or any other underlying conditions, it's especially important to follow recommendations about social distancing, washing your hands, wearing face coverings and other practices that can prevent COVID-19's spread.
- Consider getting the vaccine to protect you and others around you.





## YOUR VOICE MATTERS

**We all have the power to make a difference by speaking out for policies that help build healthier communities and healthier lives.**

Join **You're the Cure** today and be among the first to know when major policy initiatives pass or when your help is needed to advocate for a healthy future.

**Text EMPOWER to 46839 to join today!**



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Say:

Thank you for joining today. Before we close this lesson, we would like to mention other ways you can continue your health journey and help others in your community.

Each of us have the power to make a difference in our community. By joining the American Heart Association's You're the Cure program, you can be among the first to know when major policy initiatives pass or when your help is needed to advocate for an issue. Text EMPOWER to 46839 to join today!

## USE YOUR VOICE TO CREATE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

You can help us work to draw communities together on the path to building a sustainable culture of health.

Go to [EmPOWEREDtoServe.org](https://EmPOWEREDtoServe.org)

Sign up to become an ambassador and learn how you can be a part of the movement!



**Join us as we impact the health of ALL in our communities!**

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Encourage everyone to be active in the EmPOWERED to Serve movement.

Share how being part of the ETS movement helps you embrace a lifestyle of health.

Encourage everyone to come to a future ETS health lesson.

## WRAP-UP

**We appreciate your thoughts!**

Tell us what you liked best.

Email us at:  
[empoweredtoserve@heart.org](mailto:empoweredtoserve@heart.org)



Thank everyone for coming.

Thank all the volunteers who helped coordinate the program.

Take a moment to share an inspirational reading or ask the group to join you in an uplifting song.

# WE ARE EMPOWERED TO SERVE

...serve our health, serve our community



**The American Heart Association requests that this document be cited as follows:**  
American Heart Association EmPOWERED to Serve Health Lessons. [EmPOWEREDtoServe.org](https://www.heart.org/EmPOWEREDtoServe.org)

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