

# Getting to Goal

## Working with your doctor: Why straight talk is so important for African Americans with high blood pressure

*High blood pressure affects more than 40% of African Americans in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Having high blood pressure can increase your risk for complications – like stroke, kidney failure and heart disease. You can help lower this risk by getting regular medical care.*

### Understanding the Doctor-Patient Relationship

One of the most important things you can do when you have high blood pressure is to get routine medical care. But all too often, people leave the doctor's office feeling less than satisfied. This may be because doctors are trained to diagnose and treat disease, while patients want to be listened to and understood. Look at what may be happening:

What your doctor is thinking	What you are thinking
High blood pressure is a disease that can be treated	Having high blood pressure changes my life
Let me find the problem and fix it	I don't think you hear me or understand me

### Making it Work Better

When you think about it, you and your doctor both want the same thing – your good health. What can you do to have a better health care experience?

One way is to form a partnership with your doctor. Patients who take an active role in their care have better results.<sup>2</sup>

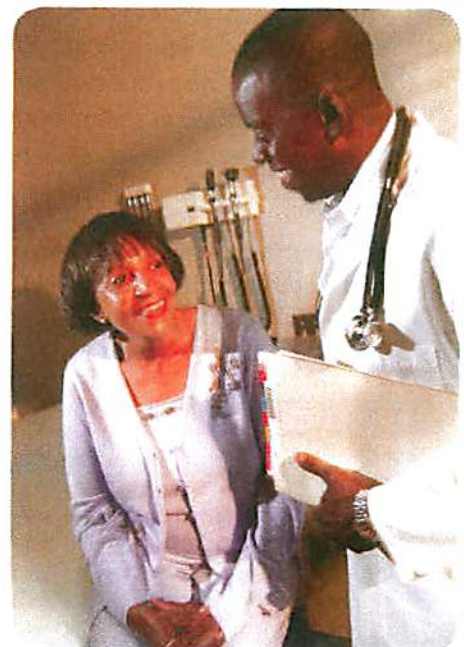
Here are some ways to do this:

### Learn About High Blood Pressure

If you don't know about your condition, you may not understand what you need to do to manage it – and why. You may not know what questions to ask your doctor. There are many places you can go to learn about high blood pressure, such as the Internet, your local library or bookstore.

*Follow your doctor's treatment plan and help lower your blood pressure by:<sup>3</sup>*

- *Losing weight if you are overweight*
- *Eating a healthy, low-sodium diet*
- *Getting aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week*
- *Limiting alcohol to one drink (women) or two drinks (men) per day*
- *Taking your medicine exactly as prescribed*



*(Over, please)*