

High Blood Pressure



WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a common disorder in which blood pressure stays very high (a reading of 140/90 mm Hg or greater). Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg.

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?

The higher number is the pressure in the artery when your heart is beating. The lower number is the pressure when the heart is resting between beats.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

High blood pressure can cause a stroke, vision loss, kidney problems or a heart attack if it is not treated.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. Sometimes it can cause headaches, vision problems or sleepiness. It is important to catch it early.

One in three adult Americans has high blood pressure, but 30% don't know that they have it. African Americans, Hispanics, Alaskan American Indians, people that aren't very active, and woman that have gone through menopause are more likely to have high blood pressure.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

See your doctor regularly. Your doctor may do a physical exam and ask you about symptoms and family history. S/he may schedule you for other tests. Your doctor may test your blood pressure over a period of time.

WHAT CAN I DO TO CONTROL MY HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

- Lose weight (if overweight)
- Stop smoking (if you smoke)
- Stop or reduce alcohol use
- Talk to your doctor about an exercise program
- Reduce sodium intake (<2.3 gm/day, or one teaspoon)
- Take your blood pressure medicine as directed
- Eat less food with saturated fat and cholesterol

If you have hypertension, schedule regular appointments with your doctor. Your PCP can prescribe medicine or refer you to a specialist to help you. If you have symptoms that concern you, call your doctor right away.



FOR MORE INFORMATION about cardiac health, call Care Management 1.800.414.6641 (TTY: 1.800.473.0989).



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