

High Blood Pressure - Hypertension

- **What is Blood Pressure and High Blood Pressure?**

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood against your blood vessels walls as it circulates through your body. Blood pressure can cause health problems if it becomes high and remains high for a long time. High blood pressure can lead to a stroke and/or heart disease. Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death in the United States.

- **How is High Blood Pressure Diagnosed? What is considered High Blood Pressure?**

Your Doctor can determine if you have high blood pressure through routine examination and evaluation of your blood pressure results. A blood pressure gauge measures the pressure in blood vessels when the heart beats (systolic) and when it rests (diastolic). The gauge on a blood pressure cuff measures in millimeters of mercury (abbreviated as mmHg).

- Normal Blood Pressure: systolic less than 120 mmHg - diastolic less than 80 mmHg

- At Risk Blood Pressure: systolic 120-139 mmHg - diastolic 80-89 mmHg

- High Blood Pressure: systolic 140 mmHg or higher - diastolic 90 mmHg or higher

- **What Causes High Blood Pressure? Am I at risk?**

Anyone can develop high blood pressure. One out of every three adults has elevated blood pressure. That is approximately 67 million people in the United States!

Exact causes of high blood pressure are not known, but several factors are known to increase the risk of having high blood pressure.

- High Salt Diet

- Smoking

- Overweight or Obesity

- Lack of Physical Activity

- Too Much Alcohol Consumption

- Stress

Risk factors that are beyond our control include your genetics, age, sex, and race or ethnicity. **We can reduce our risk by:** eating a healthy diet, not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, avoiding large amounts of alcohol consumption, and managing stress.

- **What are the signs and symptoms of High Blood Pressure?**

High blood pressure usually has no warning signs or symptoms, so many people do not realize they have it. That is why it is important to visit your doctor regularly and have your blood pressure monitored. Most people are without symptoms, but others may experience the following:

- Severe Headache

- Severe Anxiety

- Shortness of Breath

- Nosebleeds

- Feeling Pulsations in the Neck or Head

- **How is High Blood Pressure treated?**

If you have high blood pressure, your Doctor may prescribe medication to treat it. Lifestyle changes can be just as important as taking medicine.

- **Can High Blood Pressure be prevented?**

You can take several steps to maintain normal blood pressure levels.

- Get your blood pressure checked regularly
- Eat a healthy diet
- Don't smoke
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Limit alcohol use
- Practice Stress Management

Learn more about high blood pressure at the following websites:

- American Heart Association: <https://www.heart.org>
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>