

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



What is high blood pressure?

- Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against blood vessel walls. Normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mm Hg.
- No one knows exactly what causes most cases of high blood pressure. It usually can't be cured, but it can be controlled.
- High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. It is truly a "Silent Killer."

	Systolic	Diastolic
Normal blood pressure	Less than 120	Less than 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	80-89
Hypertension	140 and higher	90 and higher

Who is at higher risk?

- Family history of high blood pressure
- People over the age of 35
- Overweight people
- People who aren't physically active
- People who consume too much salt
- People who drink too much alcohol
- People with diabetes, gout or kidney disease
- African Americans
- Pregnant women
- Women who take birth controls or had high blood pressure during pregnancy

If I feel fine, why is it dangerous?

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to:

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)
- Kidney problems
- Heart failure
- Eye problems

What can I do to prevent or control high blood pressure?

- Lose weight if you're overweight.
- Quit smoking.

- Eat healthy meals low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and salt.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Be more physically active. Exercise at least 30 minutes on most or all days of the week.
- Take medicine the way your doctor tells you.
- Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level.
- Get your blood pressure checked regularly by a health care provider.

What should I eat?

- There is actually a diet called the DASH diet that recommends increasing servings of fruits, vegetables, and lowfat dairy products, while decreasing sodium (salt) and saturated fat. This diet helps to control blood pressure.
- Try eating foods:
 - Rich in magnesium such as: unsalted nuts, soybeans, seafood, and whole grains
 - High in potassium such as: avocados, sweet potatoes, spinach, oranges, and bananas
 - High in calcium such as: yogurt, milk, cheese, and almonds
 - High in protein and fiber

How can medicine help?

- There are a number of different medications available for high blood pressure. It may take 3 to 4 different medications to control your blood pressure.

What are some common side effects of blood pressure medication?

- Dizziness
- Tiredness, fatigue
- Headache
- Slow heart rate
- Depression

Does anyone need to know if I have high blood pressure?

Yes, be sure to tell other doctors you see as well as your pharmacist. These healthcare providers may need to recommend other medications for you based on your high blood pressure. For example, it can be unsafe to take certain pain medications and certain cough and cold medicines.