

7072 – Hypertension



What is Hypertension: Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is classified as any blood pressure that is over 139 (systolic) or 89 (diastolic). A healthy blood pressure is anything at or less than 120/80. The systolic number is the pressure in your arteries as the blood is being pumped into the arteries. The diastolic number is the pressure in your arteries between heartbeats.

What are the Risks?

- ♥ **Excess Weight:** Having a higher than average weight is a major factor for developing hypertension.
- ♥ **Alcohol:** Regular drinking, especially excess drinking can increase your risk.
- ♥ **Smoking:** Each time you smoke your blood pressure rises. Nicotine narrows the blood vessels making it harder for blood to flow regularly.
- ♥ **Diet:** A diet, high in saturated fat and cholesterol, increases your risks. Also many diets are high in sodium. A high sodium diet increases water retention and therefore an increase in blood pressure.
- ♥ **Exercises:** Lack of physical activity will leave you with poor cardiovascular health that increases your risk of developing hypertension.
- ♥ **Stress:** Emotional stress, frustration and feelings of futility contribute to high blood pressure.
- ♥ **Oral contraceptives:** Birth control pills can increase blood pressure.
- ♥ **Repressed Anger:** Anger causes physical tension, which can increase blood pressure.
- ♥ **Heredity:** A family history of high blood pressure puts you at an increased risk.
- ♥ **Gender:** Men are generally at higher risk than woman; however, a woman's risk increases during pregnancy or after menopause.
- ♥ **Age:** After age 35 risks increase.
- ♥ **Race:** African Americans tend to run a higher risk than other races.



Quick Fact: Of all the people who have high blood pressure at least 30% don't know they have it and of those who do, only 34% are getting adequate treatment.

Key Points: **1.** There are no obvious symptoms of high blood pressure. **2.** An ideal blood pressure is 120/80 or lower. **3.** A blood pressure that is consistently 140/90 or higher is considered high. **4.** High blood pressure greatly increases your risk of coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, and stroke. **5.** Blood Pressure between 120/80 and 140/90 is called prehypertension – an indication of increased cardiovascular risk. **6.** Blood pressure is just one of several health factors that require lifelong attention.

Source: Axmaker, Larry W., Hall, Donald R. *WellAssured Guide to Managing High Blood pressure*. 2006.

