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in Blacks

High Blood Pressure

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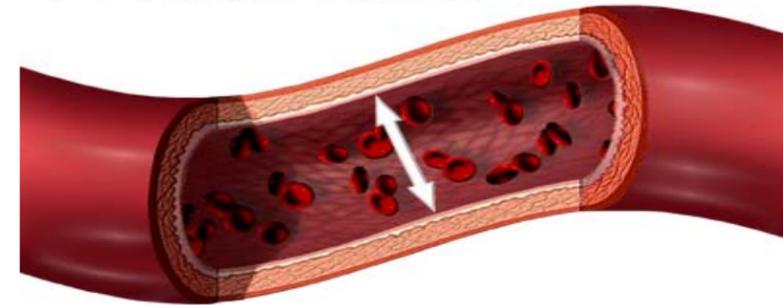
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High Blood Pressure/Hypertension

What is blood pressure and why blood pressure numbers are important?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood against the artery walls. If blood pressure is elevated over time it can lead to high blood pressure also referred to as hypertension. Hypertension is dangerous because it makes the heart work too hard and contributes to hardening of the arteries. High blood pressure puts you at risk for stroke, heart disease, heart failure and kidney failure.

Blood pressure is the measurement of force applied to artery walls



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Blood Pressure Numbers to Know: (In mm Hg)

Normal (less than)	120/80 mm Hg
Prehypertensive	120-139/80-89
Hypertensive	140/90 or higher

Prehypertension is an increased risk for hypertension.

What do these numbers mean?

120/80 - The first number (120), also referred to as systolic, represents the pressure when the heart is beating. The second number (80), referred to as diastolic, represents the pressure when the heart is resting between beats. The systolic pressure is always stated first and the diastolic pressure second.

Example: 120/80 (120 over 80); systolic = 120, diastolic = 80

Did You Know...

- About 72 million people in the United States age 20 and older have high blood pressure.
- Of those people with high blood pressure, 71.8 percent were aware of their condition.
- Black people are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure than the general population.

What Are the Risk Factors?

Controllable Risk Factors

- **Obesity** — People with a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or higher are more likely to develop high blood pressure.
- **Eating too much salt** — A high sodium intake increases blood pressure in some people.
- **Drinking too much alcohol** — Heavy and regular use of alcohol can increase blood pressure dramatically.
- **Lack of physical activity** — An inactive lifestyle makes it easier to become overweight and increases the chance of high blood pressure.
- **Stress** — This is often mentioned as a risk factor, but stress levels are hard to measure, and responses to stress vary from person to person.



Uncontrollable Risk Factors

- **Race** — Black people develop high blood pressure more often than whites people and it tends to occur earlier and to be more severe. Black women are at greater risk compared to black men and other racial groups.
- **Heredity** — If your parents, or other close blood relatives, have high blood pressure, you're more likely to develop it.
- **Age** — In general, the older you get, the greater your chance of developing high blood pressure. It occurs most often in people over age 35. Men seem to develop it most often between ages 35 and 55. Women are more likely to develop it after menopause.

How Can I Improve or Prevent High Blood Pressure?

- ✓ **Decrease Sodium/Salt Intake.** Less sodium helps lower blood pressure in most people. Herbs and spices give food flavor and avoid the risk of high sodium intake.
- ✓ **DASH.** Follow the eating plan of Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension.
- ✓ **Eat for Heart Health.** Consume a diet rich in high fiber products such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- ✓ **Get Regular Physical Activity.** Getting regular physical activity with approval from your doctor will help reduce blood pressure and improve overall heart health.
- ✓ **Lose Weight if You're Overweight.** Talk to your doctor to see if this is an option. Losing weight will reduce the strain on your heart. Often, weight loss will cause your blood pressure to drop.
- ✓ **Manage Stress.** Trying to relax throughout the day can help improve blood pressure.
- ✓ **Stop Smoking.** Smoking is another risk factor for heart disease and stroke.
- ✓ **Avoid Excessive Alcohol.** Some studies say that drinking more than 3 to 4 ounces of 80-proof alcohol per day will raise blood pressure. Limit your alcohol consumption to no more than 1–2 drinks a day.

