

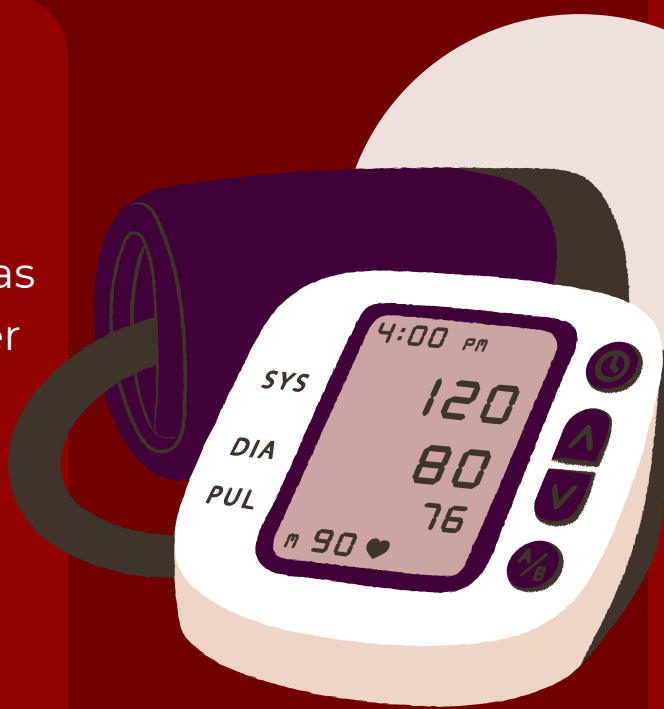


Hypertension & Cardiovascular Disease

RIGHTS FOR HEALTH

What is hypertension?

Hypertension is a disorder where your blood pressure is too high. Current guidelines define high blood pressure as a pressure $\geq 130/80$ mmHg. This number may differ for different age groups. Patients with blood pressure between $120/80$ mmHg and $129/$ mmHg, are generally considered at risk for hypertension and may need to take preventive measures.



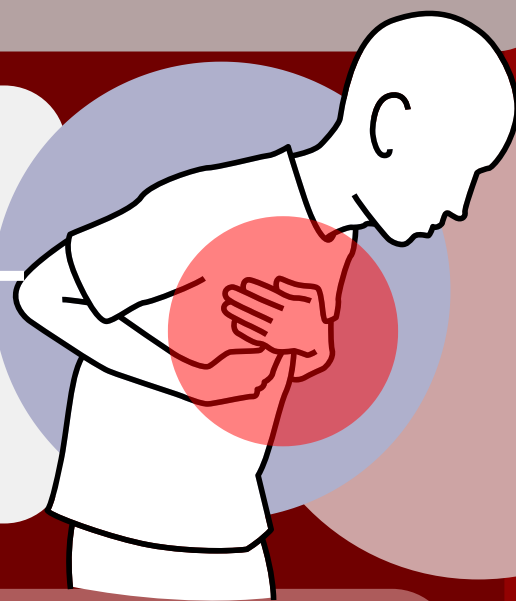
How is hypertension diagnosed?

It is recommended to check your blood pressure regularly. This may be done at a doctor's appointment, at home with a blood pressure cuff or at your local pharmacy. While 1 high measurement may just be a result of your situation, having 2 or more high blood pressure readings could be a sign of clinical hypertension.



Why does it matter?

Having chronic high blood pressure can lead to serious symptoms and complications due to organ damage, including heart disease, kidney disease, eye damage, etc.



Classic signs

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness
- Headache
- Chest pain / heaviness
- Palpitations / Irregular heartbeats
- Vision problems (i.e. double vision, blurry vision)

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please talk to your doctor.

Risk Factors

- Family history of high blood pressure or heart disease
- Age
- Smoking / nicotine products
- Diet high in salt
- Overweight status
- High cholesterol
- Regular snoring / trouble breathing while sleeping
- Medications i.e. birth control, decongestants, corticosteroids, pain medication like NSAIDs

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What happens if I am diagnosed with high blood pressure?

Depending on your age, symptoms and severity of your hypertension, you may be prescribed medication. Medications can help your heart and blood vessels relax and slow down your heartbeat. In addition to medications, your doctor might suggest lifestyle changes including diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol cessation, and weight loss to help manage your blood pressure.

Your doctor might also test your blood sugar, breathing and snoring patterns while sleeping, and kidney and thyroid function, to test for organ damage or rule out other causes of hypertension. You should check in with your doctor monthly (if BP is uncontrolled) or every 3-6 months (if BP is controlled) for monitoring.

Serious Complications...



STROKE

Clot or bleed in the brain.

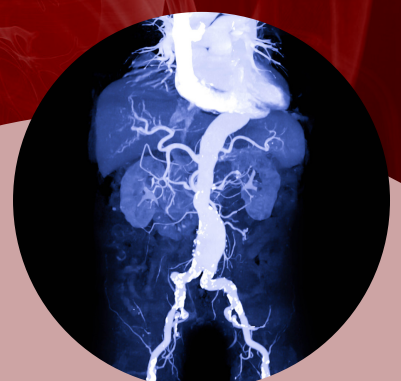
Symptoms:
Paralysis, trouble speaking, weakness or facial drooping.



HEART ATTACK

Clot in the heart stops it from pumping blood to the body.

Symptoms:
Chest pain/pressure, sweating, dizziness, limb weakness, lightheadedness.



AORTIC DISEASE

Damage to the aorta, which sends blood to the body.

Symptoms:
Back pain, chest pain, confusion, lightheadedness



When should I seek emergency care?

If you have hypertension, you may be at risk for a hypertensive crisis. This may occur if your blood pressure is not well managed. You may experience **trouble breathing, sweating, chest pain, headache, seizure, visual problems, confusion, and bloody or minimal urine.** These may be signs of organ damage.

Preventive Care Measures

While some patients are at higher risk for hypertension due to genetics and other health issues, certain lifestyle changes may help you with your blood pressure management.

- Low salt DASH diet
- Regular exercise
- Stop smoking
- Reduce alcohol intake
- Maintain normal cholesterol levels