

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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Hypertension – Decrease Your Risk by Education



Hypertension is called a “silent killer” because it does not cause symptoms unless it is severely high and, without your knowing it, causes major organ damage if not treated.

When you have high blood pressure, or hypertension, the force of blood against your artery walls is too strong. High blood pressure can damage your arteries, heart, and kidneys and lead to atherosclerosis and stroke.

To promote more aggressive and earlier treatment of high blood pressure, new and more aggressive high blood pressure guidelines have been developed.

Millions of people whose blood pressure was previously considered

borderline high (130–139/85–89) or normal (120/80) now fall into the “pre-hypertension” range, based on new, more aggressive high blood pressure guidelines from the Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee (JNC 7) on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure.

Because new studies show the risk of heart disease and stroke begins to increase at lower blood pressures than previously believed, health experts lowered the acceptable normal range

What causes high blood pressure?

In most cases, a doctor may not be able to pinpoint the exact cause of

your high blood pressure. But several factors are known to increase blood pressure, including obesity, a family history of high blood pressure, high salt intake, and aging. A sedentary lifestyle and stress, may also cause your blood pressure to rise.

What are the symptoms?

Usually you will not feel any warning signs or symptoms of high blood pressure, and you will not know you have it until a health professional takes a blood pressure reading. Hypertension develops slowly and can cause serious organ damage, usually without any symptoms.

(Over)



Hypertension - Decrease your Risk ... (Continued)

If you develop severe high blood pressure, you may have headaches, visual disturbances, nausea, and vomiting. Malignant high blood pressure (hypertensive crisis), which is hypertension that rises rapidly, can also cause these symptoms. Untreated malignant hypertension can damage the brain, heart, eyes, or kidneys. It is a medical emergency that requires immediate hospitalization.

Over time, if you do not receive treatment for your high blood pressure, you may experience symptoms caused by damage to your heart, brain, kidney, or eyes, which can include coronary artery disease, stroke, and kidney (renal) failure.



What increases your risk for developing high blood pressure?

Several factors increase your risk for high blood pressure. Some of them are lifestyle issues you can control.

Lifestyle issues you can control such as obesity and not being active or exercising, drinking alcohol

Blood Pressure Measurement

Your blood pressure measurement consists of two numbers: systolic and diastolic.

The **systolic measurement** is the pressure of blood against your artery walls when the heart has just finished pumping (contracting). It is the first or top number of a blood pressure reading.

The **diastolic measurement** is the pressure of blood against your artery walls between heartbeats, when the heart is relaxed and filling with blood. It is the second or bottom number in a blood pressure reading.

Blood Pressure Values

Level	Systolic	Diastolic
High blood pressure is:	140 or above	90 or above
Pre-hypertension is:	120 to 139	80 to 89
Normal adult (age 18 or older) blood pressure is:	119 or below	79 or below

Spring Announcement

It is that time of year again for Health Fairs!

The Health Fair claim forms are available at www.ctsi.org under CHP Documents.

(3 drinks a day or more), eating a lot of salty or processed foods.

Risk factors you can't control include a family history of high blood pressure, your race (being African-American increases your risk), and aging. Ninety percent of people who, at age 55, do not have hypertension will eventually develop it.

Source:

WebMD at www.WebMD.com

