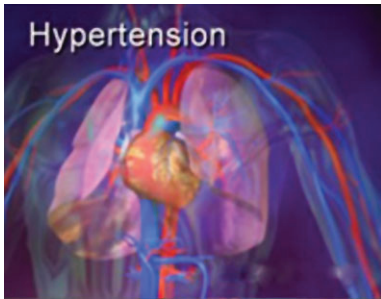


What You Should Know About

High Blood Pressure

What is High Blood Pressure?

Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension. High blood pressure means that the



pressure in your arteries is higher than it should be. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against walls of the arteries. It is written as two numbers,

for example 120/80mmhg. The “top” or systolic number is the pressure when the heart beats. The “bottom” or diastolic number is the pressure when the heart is at rest. High blood pressure is when the systolic number is 140 or higher, or the diastolic number is 90 or higher.

Causes of High Blood Pressure

In most cases the cause of high blood pressure is not known. High blood pressure can not be cured but it can be controlled. Some people have a high risk for high blood pressure.

Risk Factors for high blood pressure are:

- People over 35 years of age
- Race: African Americans have a higher risk for developing high blood pressure than white Americans.
- People with close blood relatives who have high blood pressure.

These risk factors can not be controlled or changed.

Other risk factors like:

- being overweight
- lack of exercise
- smoking

- eating foods that are high in salt and fat and low in potassium
- drinking alcohol
- stress

can be controlled or changed to lower the risk of high blood pressure.

Symptoms of High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. Many people don't know they have it. These people are at risk for a heart attack, heart failure, strokes, or kidney failure. This is why high blood pressure is called the “silent killer”. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is by going to your doctor and checking your pressure.

Treatment and Prevention

High blood pressure can be prevented and treated. Changes in the way you live are one of the most important things you can do to control your blood pressure.

Lifestyle changes like:

- Losing weight if you are overweight
- Eating a healthy diet that is low in salt and fats
- Eating more fruits, nuts, and vegetables
- Exercising regularly
- Drinking low-fat milk
- Limiting alcohol and caffeine
- Not smoking
- Managing stress
- Getting plenty of rest

If lifestyle changes don't work, the doctor may prescribe medicine to help lower or control high blood pressure.

