

# ***The Silent Killer:***

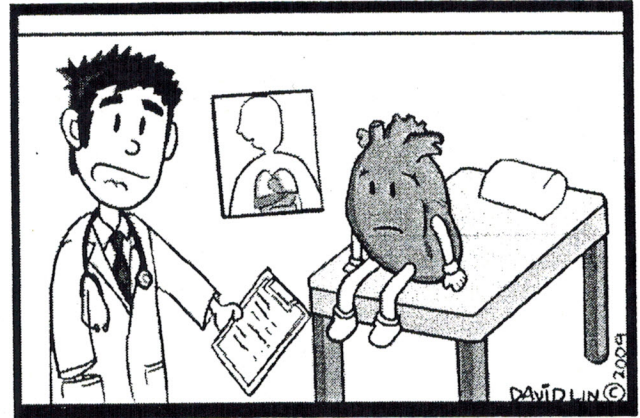
## ***High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)***

Are you about to be a victim of a silent killer? How would you know if you were on its list? Most often, **high blood pressure (hypertension)** has no symptoms. It attacks people of all ages and backgrounds. This common criminal strikes without warning.

In fact, one in five people with the condition don't know they have it. Internally, it can quietly damage the heart, lungs, blood vessels, brain, and kidneys if left untreated. It's a major risk factor for strokes and heart attacks in the U.S. And it may leave death and destruction in its path. Its calling card?

- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Kidney failure
- Blindness

But you can stop this silent killer – if you catch it in time.



### What is Hypertension?

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a common condition that will catch up with most people who live into older age. Blood pressure is the force of blood pressing against the walls of your arteries. When it's too high, it raises the heart's workload and can cause serious damage to the arteries. Over time, uncontrolled high blood pressure increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

Don't become high blood pressure's next victim. Confront the killer and stop it in its tracks. Start by learning the facts about blood pressure and how it becomes high. Then check your blood pressure as often as your doctor suggests. Spring into action if your blood pressure is too high.

**Learn the Facts**

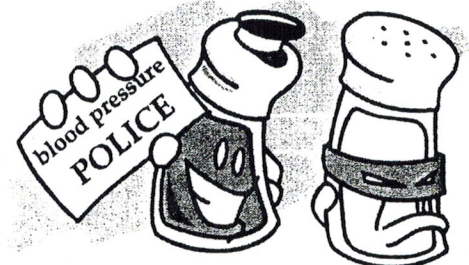
You need blood pressure to live. But high blood pressure increases your risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure and blindness. Learn now to lower your risk.

**Check your Pressure**

If your blood pressure is high, you may be under attack by this silent killer and not even know it. So get your pressure checked. It's easy, painless and quick!

**Follow your Plan**

You can control high blood pressure if you have a plan. All it takes is regular health checkups, simple changes in what you eat, exercise, and sometimes medication.

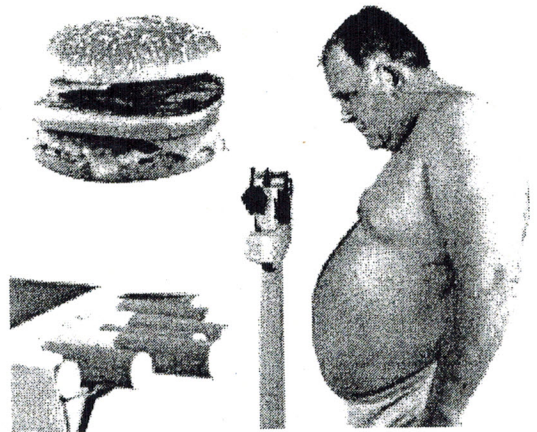




The silent killer may be after you – and you may not even know it. Although high blood pressure can attack anyone, some people are at greater risk than others.

## Your Lifestyle

- Smoking
- Often eating salty, fried or greasy food
- Often having more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day
- Too much stress
- Having a “sit-down” lifestyle



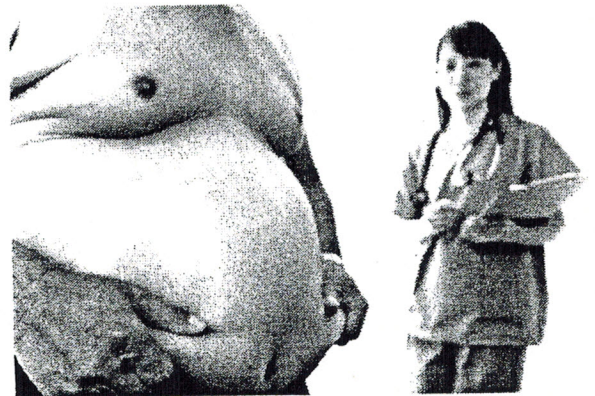
## Your Background

- Over the age of 60
- A parent, brother or sister has had high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke
- African American



## Your Medical History

- Overweight
- Had a stroke
- Cholesterol level is over 200
- Have diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease or arterial disease of the legs
- It's been more than a year since you had blood pressure checked



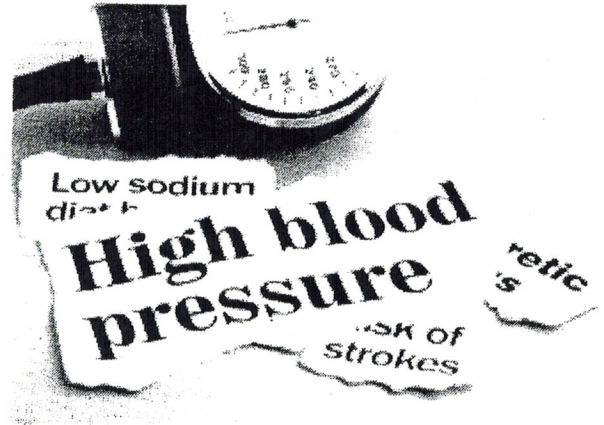
# Facts About Blood Pressure

## What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force created as your heart pumps blood and moves it through your blood vessels. This constant blood flow provides your body with the oxygen it needs. In short, it keeps you alive.

## Your Heart: A Non-Stop Pump

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, your heart pumps away, sending oxygen-rich blood through your body. Your heart is a string, fist-sized muscle. When it contracts (squeezes), blood moves from the heart into your blood vessels.



## Your Vessels: Pipelines For Blood

Your blood vessels are a network of stretchy, smoothly lined "pipes". These pipes are surrounded by muscles and nerves. The vessels that carry fresh blood from your heart to your body are called *arteries*. The vessels that return used blood from your body back to your heart and lungs are called *veins*.

## Normal Blood Pressure

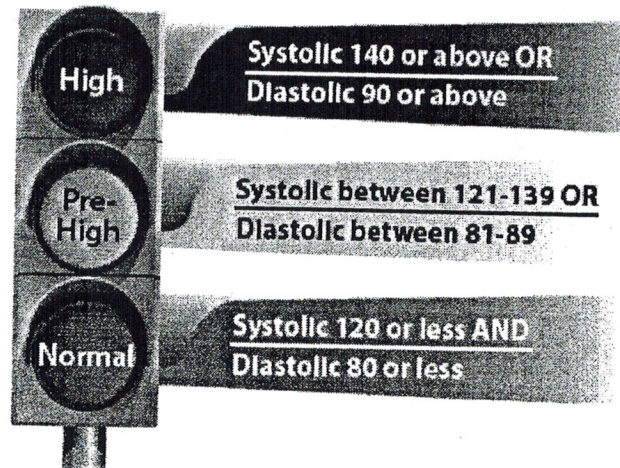
A blood pressure reading measures the force of blood as it presses against the inside walls of your arteries. Two measurements are taken: Systolic blood pressure and Diastolic blood pressure.

### ❖ Systolic Blood Pressure

The top number, measure the force while your heart pumps. A normal, healthy systolic blood pressure is below 120.

### ❖ Diastolic Blood Pressure

The bottom number, measure the force between heart pumps. A normal, healthy diastolic blood pressure is below 80.



Note: If you have diabetes, kidney disease or heart failure, you may need to maintain a different blood pressure than shown here.

## Your Changing Blood Pressure

Your diastolic blood pressure stays about the same level at all time. But your systolic blood pressure changes often. These changes reflect your body's normal response to your daily routine and stress.

**When Blood Pressure Is Too High** the silent killer becomes a real threat to your health. The systolic or diastolic measurement, or both, rises and remains above the normal range.

## High Blood Pressure Damages Arteries

Ongoing high blood pressure causes changes in artery walls. The walls can thicken. This narrows the opening inside the artery and can reduce or block blood flow. Over time, high blood pressure also causes the artery walls to become rough. These roughened walls make it easier for **plaque** (a fatty material) to collect. As plaque builds up inside the wall, there is less room for blood to flow. Also, a piece of plaque could break off and completely block blood flow.

## An Overworked Heart

When your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder than it should to pump blood through the arteries. Over time, this can damage the heart muscle.

# When The Silent Killer Strikes

## Stroke

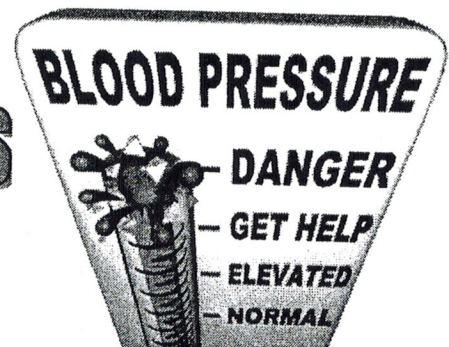
Stroke results when arteries in the brain become blocked. Without blood – and the oxygen it carries – brain tissue dies. This means that functions controlled by that part of the brain are lost. Stroke also happens when too much pressure bursts blood vessels in the brain.

## Blindness

Blindness or impaired vision occurs when tiny blood vessels in the back of the eye rupture or become blocked, damaging the surrounding eye tissue.

## Heart Attack

Heart attack occurs when arteries in the heart muscle become blocked. Part of the muscle **"starves"** and dies. The heart then has a harder time pumping blood.

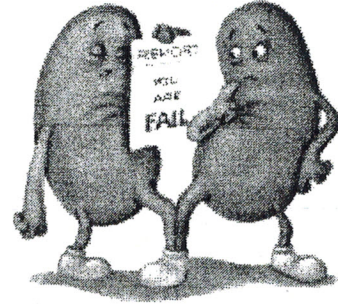


## Heart Failure

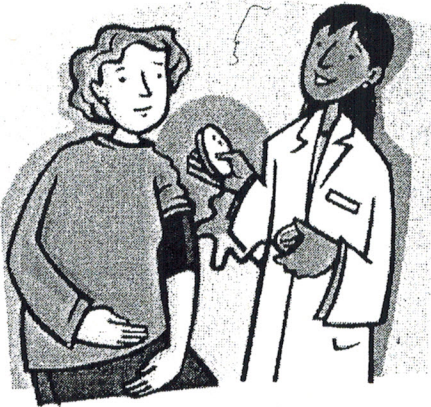
Heart failure results when the heart pumps too hard for too long, trying to keep blood flowing through the body. Like an overused rubber band, the heart's muscles slowly lose their elasticity and the heart expands.

## Kidney Failure

Kidney failure happens when tiny vessels in the kidney become blocked. The kidneys can no longer remove wastes from the body. As kidney failure worsens, the body is slowly poisoned. Kidney problems can also occur if arteries to the kidneys become damaged and restrict blood flow.



## Check Your Blood Pressure Regularly



How can you tell if you're falling prey to the silent killer? Since high blood pressure rarely shows symptoms, the only way to know for sure is to check your blood pressure. If you haven't had it checked within the last year, now is a good time to do so. If it's normal now, have it checked each year. And if your blood pressure is high – even just a little bit – see your doctor. The two of you can make a plan to bring it under control. It's up to you to stop the silent killer's attack.

### A Quick Test

Having your blood pressure checked is painless, quick, and often free. Testing may be done at health fairs, your employer's medical department, or a doctor's office. You can check your own blood pressure on machines at some pharmacies and stores. Or you can check it at home.

### If Your Blood Pressure Is Under 120/80

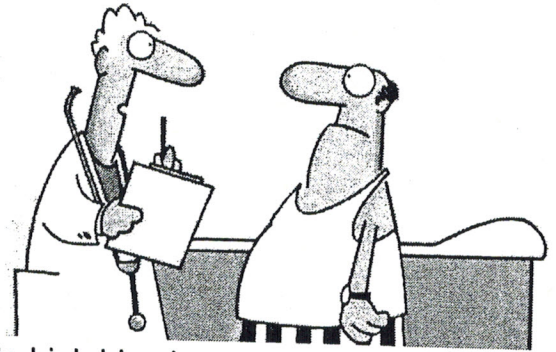
This means your blood pressure is healthy and normal for an adult. Maintain it by reducing any risks. Try eating less salt, losing weight, or stopping smoking. Have your blood pressure check again in one year.

### If It's 120/80 or Higher

This means your blood pressure may be too high. If so, you would be at risk for the problems high blood pressure can cause. See your doctor. If your blood pressure remains high when checked on different days, your doctor will begin to look for causes. A plan will be set up to control your blood pressure.

## Medical History

You will be asked about your family history, general health, risk factors, and any medications you are taking.



## Physical Exam

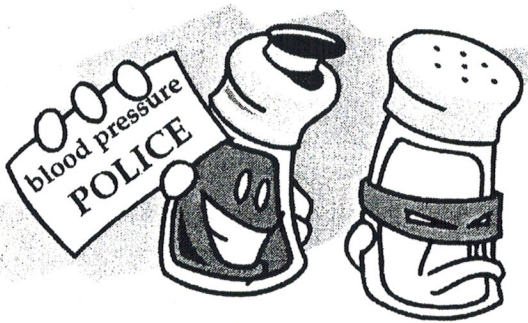
An exam helps find conditions that might be related to high blood pressure. Your doctor checks your weight and heart rate, and looks for other signs of disease.

## Diagnostic Tests

Tests help your doctor assess any damage you may have from high blood pressure. Tests may include an electro- cardiogram (EKG/ECG), and blood and urine tests.

## Controlling High Blood Pressure

The weapon that can stop the silent killer is a plan to control high blood pressure. Your doctor suggests a plan for you. It may include changes in the way you eat and in your lifestyle. If those aren't enough, you may also be asked to take medication.



## Shake Away The Salt And Fat

Reducing the amount of salt you eat and eating less fat could help you control your weight and your blood pressure. It could also lower your risk for heart problems.

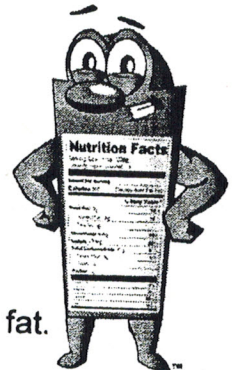
That's because some fats add to the plaque that can clog your arteries. Here are some tips for cutting down on salt and fat. You may find your health improves. And you may be adding new foods and flavors to your list of favorites. If you need help, your doctor can refer you to a nutritionist. Or you can check out classes at your workplace or local hospital.

### At The Store

Salt and fat are hidden in many foods at the market. Make low-salt, low-fat choices by reading labels carefully. Buy more fresh fruits and vegetables. And select fish, skinless chicken or lean meats. Be aware that some "diet" food contain too much salt.

### Read Food Labels

Reading the food label on packaged food can help you cut down on salt (sodium) and fat.



- Fat: A good rule is to choose foods that have 3 or fewer grams of total fat for each 100 calories. Also, the less saturated fat or trans fat, the better.
- Salt: Have no more than 2,300 mg of sodium each day.

### **In The Kitchen**

Low-salt, lo-fat food can be tasty, healthy and enjoyed by your whole family.

Try these cooking tips:

- Microwave, broil, grill, bake or steam food without adding salt or fat.
- Use non-stick sprays or cookware.
- Avoid adding salt while preparing meals.
- Try using only half the salt in recipes.

### **Spice It Up**

With creative use of spices, you'll never miss salt and fat.

- Sprinkle salt-free herbal blends on meats and vegetables.
- Use low-salt, low-fat dressings on salads and sandwiches.
- Ask your doctor about using salt substitutes.

### **Eating Out**

Low-salt, low-fat foods are becoming popular items on restaurant menus. In fact, many menus have a "heart healthy" section. If you don't see any healthy choices, speak up. Ask for food to be prepared with no added salt. And ask to have your food broiled or baked rather than fried.

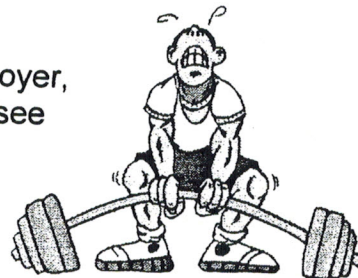
# **Choose A Healthy Lifestyle**

When you choose a healthy lifestyle, the silent killer has fewer chances to make an attack. Making lifestyle changes can help lower your blood pressure. It can also give you a new sense of pride in yourself. Each of the tips listed here may help lower your blood pressure. But you may feel overwhelmed if you try them all at once. Ask your doctor for advice about where to begin. And use your resources to support your new, healthy lifestyle. These resources could include family, friends, and your employer's medical or health department, community groups and your local hospital.

### **Exercise Regularly**

Aerobic exercise makes your heart and blood vessels work better. It can also help you lose weight. Walking, bicycling or swimming are all good aerobic choices. For the best results, exercise for at least 30 minutes on most days. Check with your doctor before doing strength training exercises. They may increase your blood pressure.

If you'd like to exercise with a group, check with your employer, community education center or local fitness club. And be sure to see your doctor before beginning any exercise program.





## Watch Your Weight

Losing weight may lower your blood pressure to a normal level. Or it may allow your doctor to reduce or stop your medication. Check with your doctor to find out what your goal weight should be and how to get there. Exercising most days and cutting back on salt and fat are good first steps to controlling your weight. Also, think about joining a weight-loss group through your employer or community.

## Keep Stress Under Control

Ongoing stress causes your heart to work harder and faster. It also constricts your blood vessels, which increases your blood pressure. You can't avoid all stress. But you can learn to control it through relaxation techniques, exercise and a positive attitude. See if your employer, doctor, local hospital or community group offer stress reduction classes. You can also find tips on stress management in books and tapes. Don't forget that laughter may be the best stress reliever of all.

## Stop Smoking

Smoking increases blood pressure and damages blood vessels. It's also a risk factor for stroke and heart disease. If you quit smoking, you reduce your risk and make your control plan work even better.



## Limit Alcohol

Having more than 2 alcoholic drinks (a total of 1 ounce of pure alcohol) on most days may raise your blood pressure. Instead, drink juice, low-calorie soft drinks, or low-salt mineral water with a twist of lime.

# Taking Blood Pressure Medication

Sometimes, making changes in your eating and lifestyle may not be enough to ward off the silent killer and control your high blood pressure. In that case, your doctor may prescribe medication to go with your healthy lifestyle. There are many types of medication. Each works to control high blood pressure in its own way. As with treatment for any disease, there are benefits and risks to balance. But most people find that the benefits are worth it. Medication lowers blood pressure and decreases the risk of stroke, heart failure and other problems.

## If Medication Is Prescribed

Medication can safely lower high blood pressure. Your doctor explains the medication, including its side effects. Your blood pressure will be checked often to see how well the medication works. Most people have few side effects from their medication. But tell your doctor right away if you feel different or worse after beginning to take the medication.

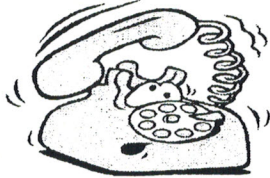
## Types Of Medication

**Diuretics** are the medication prescribed most often for high blood pressure. They lower your blood pressure by removing the excess fluid and salt. Because diuretics can sometimes make you lose potassium, your doctor will watch your potassium level.

**Beta-blockers** keep your heart from pumping too hard. Blood pumped from your heart then presses with less force against your arteries. This lowers your blood pressure.

**Adrenergic inhibitors, ACE inhibitors, calcium antagonists, vasodilators and angiotensin II blockers** lower your blood pressure by opening up constricted blood vessels.

**Call your doctor if...**



You notice any side effects ( such as headaches, dizziness, or nausea). Call whether you think the side effect is major or minor. Your doctor can change your dosage, switch your medication, or give you tips for dealing with side effects.

## Tips for taking Medication

### Make It A Habit

High blood pressure medication only works when it's taken as directed. So follow the instructions. And take your medication at the same time each day.

- Mark your medication schedule on a calendar. Cross it off each time you take your dose.
- Use a pill box to hold a one or two week supply.
- Keep your medication near your toothbrush.

Never stop taking medication unless your doctor tells you to. Stopping your medication can cause a sudden, life-threatening increase in your blood pressure. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to suggest the best time to take your medication.

If you forget to take your medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do.

**Remember:** Don't double up by taking two the next time.

### Taking Control Of Your High Blood Pressure

Don't let yourself become a victim of high blood pressure. Stop this silent killer by having your blood pressure checked regularly. And, if it's high, follow your doctor's plan for getting it under control.

