

Treating Newly Diagnosed High Blood Pressure

Why is it important to treat high blood pressure?

Treatment is important because having high blood pressure increases your risk of heart attack, stroke, and heart failure.

How is it detected?

Your doctor can measure your blood pressure with a blood pressure cuff that goes around your arm.

What causes it?

No one knows for sure. However, the following factors can increase your risk:

- Older age. Men older than 55 years and women older than 65 years are at increased risk.
- Race. Blacks develop high blood pressure more often than other races.
- A relative with high blood pressure, heart disease, or stroke.
- Obesity.
- Not getting enough exercise.
- Drinking too much alcohol.
- Using tobacco products.
- Eating an unhealthy diet. Eating foods that have too much salt (sodium) or not

enough potassium can increase your risk of high blood pressure.

How is it treated?

Treating high blood pressure starts with making changes in your lifestyle, such as exercising more, eating healthier food, and, if necessary, losing weight and quitting smoking. If your blood pressure is still too high after you do these things, you might need to take medicine to lower your blood pressure. These medicines need to be taken every day. It is important to get regular checkups so your doctor can make sure the medicines are working.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Heart Association

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/High-Blood-Pressure_UCM_002020_SubHomePage.jsp

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/>

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/hbp/> and <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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