

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

It's a killer!

It's a matter of life and death.

High blood pressure is called the silent killer because many of us don't even know we have it. About one in four American adults (50 million) have high blood pressure. Every time you visit the doctor, your blood pressure is checked. This shows how much work your heart is doing to pump your blood through your body. Your blood travels through hollow pipes called arteries. If the arteries get blocked or hard, your heart must work harder. That makes your blood pressure go up. If blood cannot get through to your brain, you can have a stroke. A stroke can cause you to lose your:

- Vision
- Ability to speak
- Power to move parts of your body

IT CAN EVEN CAUSE DEATH.

Leon County Schools

ACE Adult &
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HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE...It's a killer!

Are you at risk for high blood pressure?

Yes. We are all at risk. However, the risk is greater for:

- African-Americans
- Men
- Women over age 40

What causes high blood pressure?

No one knows for sure what causes this disease. Some of the things that can cause high blood pressure are:

- An illness
- Getting older
- Smoking
- Being overweight
- Eating too much salt
- Drinking too much beer, wine, or other alcohol
- Not exercising
- Family history
- Race

What is normal blood pressure?

Blood pressure is shown in two numbers. Normal is 120/80. This is read as 120 over 80. The first number is the pressure when the heart is pumping. The second number is the pressure when the heart is resting. Your blood pressure goes up and down during the day. It goes up when you are active or excited. It goes down when you are resting.

When is your blood pressure too high?

If your blood pressure goes up to 140 over 90 or higher, and stays there, your heart is working harder than it should. This is called high blood pressure.

What are the signs of high blood pressure?

Most of the time, there are no signs. That's why you should have your blood pressure checked from time to time by a doctor. Every now and then, you can check your blood pressure at a drug or grocery store. If your blood pressure is really high, you may notice some warning signs such as:

- Nosebleeds
- Fast or unsteady heartbeat
- Headaches
- Dizziness

Remember, you MAY NOT have any signs, but high blood pressure CAN KILL YOU. It can cause strokes, kidney damage, blindness, and heart attacks.

Does stress cause high blood pressure?

Yes. If the stress is only for a little while, your blood pressure will return to normal. So, if you do get upset, try to do something to help you relax. Exercise, quiet fun, or rest will help lower your blood pressure.

What else can I do to help my blood pressure?

- Keep your weight down
- Use spices like pepper and lemon instead of more salt
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Eat less fat
- Drink less alcohol
- Stop smoking
- Exercise
- Have a quiet time each day

What if I already have high blood pressure?

- Do all the things already listed
- See your doctor regularly
- Take the pills the doctor tells you to take
- Do not stop taking the pills unless he tells you to stop

High blood pressure is a lifelong disease. There is no cure.

Can children have high blood pressure?

Yes. Your children's blood pressure should be checked by a doctor or nurse once a year. If the problem is found early, you can keep it from getting worse.

How can I protect my children from high blood pressure?

- Regular checkups by a doctor
- Make healthy food choices
- Cut down on salt and sugar
- Help them exercise and exercise with them
- Teach them how to deal with stress

How can I find out more about high blood pressure?

- Ask your doctor
- Call your local American Heart Association
- Call the National American Heart Association
1-800-242-872