

HYPERTENSION

What is Hypertension?

Blood pressure is a definition for the force of the blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. The heart will beat an average of 100,000 times daily. Each time the heart beats, it pumps against the inside walls of your vessels' resistance to blood flow to create blood pressure. If the pressure of the vessels is too high, it can damage the vessels and restrict blood flow to vital organs. This condition is known as hypertension or high blood pressure.

Reducing blood pressure to less than 140/90 to a reading of 120/80 or less may aid in preventing damage to your kidneys, eyes, decrease the incidence of strokes and heart failure along with other serious complications. High blood pressure is a risk factor in 68% of all first heart attacks and 75% of all strokes.

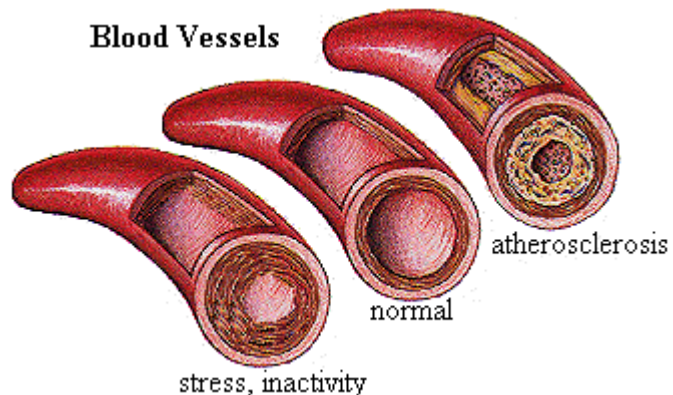
Hypertension Guidelines:

Normal BP: Less than 120/80

Hypertension: Greater than 140/90

Persons with Diabetes: Less than or equal to 130/80

Hypertension means high blood pressure. High blood pressure is an increased pressure in your blood vessels. The plaque formation in the vessel is called atherosclerosis. The plaque in the vessels leaves less space for the blood to travel through.



Picture 1: Hypertension can be caused by many factors such as stress, high cholesterol, and inactivity. It is classified into mild, moderate, and severe hypertension. If you have mild, moderate, or severe hypertension, you have an increased risk of having a heart attack or stroke. It is important to keep hypertension under control by using medication prescribed by your doctor. You will also need to make some lifestyle changes, like eating better and exercising, to decrease your risks of having a heart attack or stroke.

Symptoms of hypertension

Frequent headaches

Dizziness

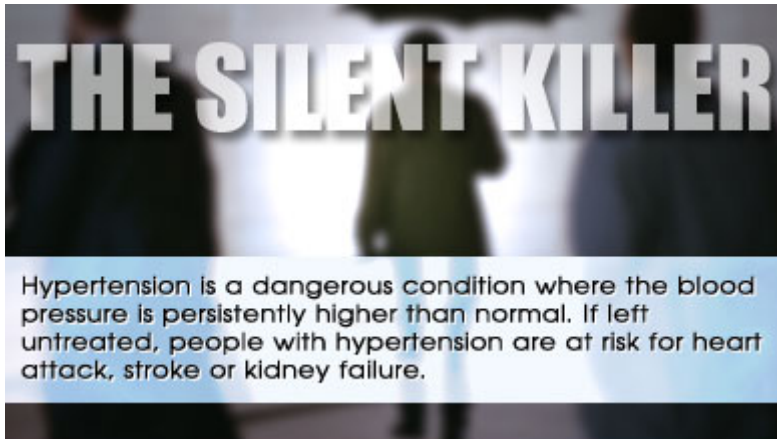
Visual disturbances

Risk factors for hypertension:

Men over age 55, women over age 65
Persons with blood relatives with HTN
African Americans
Smokers
Persons with Diabetes
Persons with high cholesterol
Women who take birth control pills
Persons who are overweight
Sodium sensitivity
Physical inactivity
Alcohol consumers
Certain drugs/diet pills

Treatment of hypertension:

Quit smoking
Healthy heart, low sodium diet
Reduce consumption of alcohol/caffeine
Exercise 30 minutes most days
Control stress
Weight loss if needed
Control/reduce stress
Possible medication if conservative therapy is ineffective



Picture 2: Hypertension is known as the silent killer because of the severity of the condition when effected persons may experience no symptoms. It is important to have blood pressure checked regularly to prevent dangerous illnesses that may result.

What does DOT state in regard to hypertension?

140-159/90-99- *If blood pressure is in this range with no previous history of high blood pressure, a 1 year certification can be issued, but your blood pressure should be less than or equal to 140/90 on re-certification. If it is higher than this, either a 3-month card or no card will be issued until adequate control is reached depending on the reading.*

160-179/100-109- *If blood pressure is in this range with no previous history of high blood pressure, a 3-month certification may be issued during which time treatment should be started. When returning for recertification a driver needs to show evidence of a note from a treating doctor stating medication/treatment regimen. If blood pressure is 140/90 or less upon return, a 12 month card can be issued from the initial exam date. Recertification will then be yearly.*

≥ 180/110- *If blood pressure is in this range, a driver will be immediately disqualified until treatment is well tolerated and blood pressure is less than or equal to 140/90. Recertification will be every 6 months.*