

Hypertension

BASIC FACTS:

Because High Blood Pressure seldom has symptoms, many people don't know they have the condition. But like a hidden time-bomb, years of uncontrolled high blood pressure can eventually explode into a heart attack, stroke or other serious health problems.

The term "blood pressure" refers to the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels. It becomes dangerous only when the pressure rises above the normal range and then stays at that level.

If the heart pumps too fast or too hard, the arteries can fill with too much blood and the pressure can rise dangerously. If the arteries are too hard or stiff, that can also cause blood pressure to rise.

Blood Pressure is expressed as the quotient of two (2) numbers:

- **Systolic Pressure** is the top number. This is a measure of the pressure in your arteries as your heart beats, filling your arteries with blood.
- **Diastolic Pressure** is the bottom number. This is the pressure in your arteries when the heart rests between beats.

High Blood Pressure, or hypertension, is defined in an adult as a systolic pressure of 140 mmHg or higher and/or a diastolic pressure of 90 mmHg or higher. High blood pressure directly increases the risk of coronary heart disease (which can lead to a heart attack) and stroke, especially when combined with other risk factors.

Please be aware that at times there are no symptoms associated with high blood pressure. It is for this reason that hypertension has become known as "the silent killer".

Tips for controlling/preventing High Blood Pressure:

- Stop Smoking Cigarettes
- Maintain a healthy weight for your size/frame
- Reduce intake of salt at meals
- Reduce intake of cholesterol and fat
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Maintain an exercise routine approved by your doctor/physician
- If necessary, ask your doctor about hypertensives, prescription drugs that can lower high blood pressure

ATTENTION: This web page is intended to be used for health information ONLY. If you or a family member has a medical emergency, please call your doctor or 911, or your local emergency service number.