



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MANAGEMENT

Blood pressure is the force exerted by the blood on the wall of the arteries (blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to all the parts of the body). This force is created by pumping actions of the heart. Each time the heart beats it pushes blood out into the arteries. The arteries expand and contract to carry the blood from the heart to parts of the body. Blood pressure remains low or normal if the arteries expand as the heart beats, allowing blood to flow freely. If the arteries are constricted, resisting blood flow, blood pressure is higher.

Your blood pressure changes many times during the day. Blood pressure goes up with stress, excitement, fear, or exercise. It should go down during relaxation. When blood pressure remains high all the time, it is called high blood pressure or hypertension.

Blood pressure is highest when the heart beats (pumps blood out). This is called systolic pressure and is the top number of a blood pressure reading.

Blood pressure is lowest when the heart rests between beats. This is called diastolic pressure and is the bottom number of a blood pressure reading.

Example: 120 (systolic)/80 (diastolic)

A blood pressure reading of 130/80 or higher is considered high blood pressure; it must be monitored closely and treated appropriately.

High blood pressure forces plaque or fat deposits into the inner walls of the arteries at a faster rate, hardening the arteries at a faster rate when compared to a person without high blood pressure.

What are the symptoms? – High blood pressure is known as the “silent killer” due to the lack of symptoms in the early stages which can be misleading. Many people feel good and don’t know they have high blood pressure until it begins to cause damage to the brain, heart, kidneys, or eyes. Don’t underestimate the seriousness of high blood pressure just because there are no symptoms.

How is it managed? – Follow your physician’s advice. No treatment plan can be successful without your full cooperation.

- Take medication, if prescribed, as prescribed
- Check blood pressure regularly and report high readings to your physician
- Exercise regularly. Walking, swimming, and bike riding are good forms of exercise. Avoid competitive sports and games, and straining exercises such as weightlifting.
- Stop smoking
- Learn to relax for short periods of time – nap, read, or work on a hobby.
- Get a good night’s sleep.
- Learn to deal with stress in a positive manner. Prolonged and unresolved stress can cause high blood pressure
- Decrease salt intake.