

High blood pressure

What is blood pressure?

The force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps blood is referred to as blood pressure. Ideal blood pressure is registered at 120 / 80 mmHg.

Higher blood pressure – within the range of 120-138 / 80-89 reflects a condition known as prehypertension.

Blood pressure that is more than 140 / 90 is considered Stage 1 high blood pressure or hypertension.

Is high blood pressure common among Americans?

Yes. High blood pressure affects 74.5 million or one-third of American adults according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. Another 36 percent of American adults have prehypertension.

What are the effects of high blood pressure?

Over time, high blood pressure can result in life threatening illnesses such as stroke, heart disease, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease.

In 2010, stroke was the fourth leading cause of death in America according to the *2010 National Vital Statistics Report*. More than 137,000 Americans died from stroke in 2010.

Who is at greater risk for high blood pressure?

- African Americans
- Men more than 45 years-of-age; women more than 55 years-of-age
- Persons with a family history of high blood pressure
- Persons under long-term stress



Additional risk factors for high blood pressure

- Overweight
- Consuming too much salt in the diet
- Physical inactivity
- Cigarette smoking
- Heavy alcohol consumption

What can be done to reduce high blood pressure?

- Exercise 30 minutes a day
- Lose weight
- Follow a healthy, low-salt diet
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Quit smoking
- Manage stress

Please call with any questions:

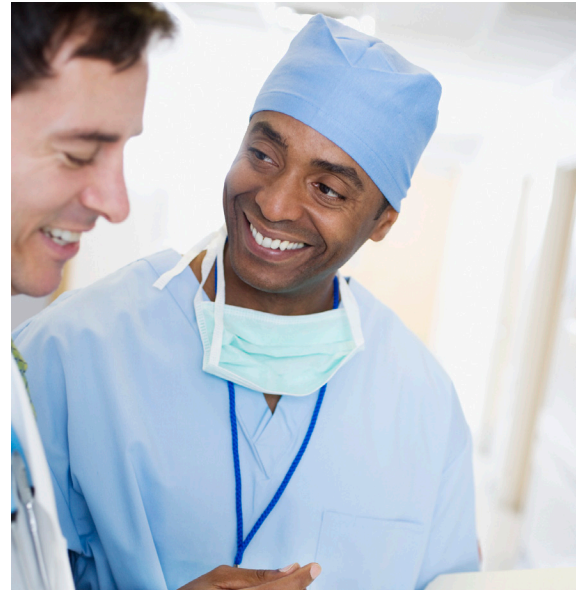
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What if lifestyle changes don't reduce blood pressure?

Doctors can prescribe medications to help control blood pressure. These include:

- **Diuretics** - to help flush excess water and salt from the body
- **Beta blockers** - to help the heart beat slower and with less force
- **ACE inhibitors** - to stop the body from making the hormone angiotensin II which causes blood vessels to narrow
- **Angiotensin II receptor blockers** - to protect blood vessels from the angiotensin II hormone thus relaxing and widening blood vessels
- **Calcium channel blockers** - to keep calcium from entering the muscle cells of the heart and blood vessels
- **Alpha blockers** - to reduce nerve impulses that tighten blood vessels
- **Alpha-beta blockers** - to reduce nerve impulse and slow the heart beat
- **Nervous system inhibitors** - to increase nerve impulses from the brain to relax and widen blood vessels
- **Vasodilators** - to relax the muscles in blood vessel walls

Vascular surgeons are the only physicians treating vascular disease today who can perform all treatment options available, including medical management, minimally invasive endovascular procedures including balloon angioplasty, atherectomy, and stent procedures, and open surgical repair including bypass.



Only when you see a vascular surgeon who offers all treatment modalities will you be assured of receiving the care that is most appropriate to your condition.

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