

Wellness Notes

High Blood Pressure

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a condition in which your resting blood pressure is consistently measured at 130/80 or greater. Nearly half of adults in the United States have high blood pressure.

Causes and Risk Factors

Research has shown that the following factors put you at a higher risk for developing high blood pressure:

- Being obese or overweight
- Being of African descent
- If male, being over age 45; if female, being over age 55
- A family history of hypertension
- Having elevated blood pressure (blood pressure in the 120-129/80 range)
- Eating an unhealthy diet that is high in sodium and low in potassium
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Being physically inactive
- Smoking and second-hand smoke

The Importance of Treatment

If left untreated, high blood pressure can cause the serious medical issues, such as:

- Enlarging of the heart, which can lead to heart failure
- Aneurysms in the arteries of the heart, brain, legs, intestines or spleen
- Narrowing of the blood vessels in the kidney, leading to kidney failure
- Hardening of the arteries, which can cause a heart attack, stroke or kidney failure
- Blood vessels bursting in the eyes

Prevention

High blood pressure can be easily prevented in some cases. Below are some of the steps you can take to avoid hypertension:

- Limit salt, fat and alcohol intake.
- Eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.
- Maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Reduce your stress.

Brought to you by your Wellness Committee