

¿WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension is another name for high blood pressure. It means that the pressure in your blood vessels is higher than normal. Anyone can have high blood pressure and it becomes more common as you get older.

Usually, there is no obvious sign that anything is wrong. If you are over 40 it is a good idea to have your blood pressure checked at least once every five years.

HAVING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKED

You can have your blood pressure checked by your doctor, the practice nurse or the pharmacist. They will put an inflatable cuff around your upper arm and pump it up for a few seconds. This measures the amount of pressure needed to stop the blood flow. Blood pressure of **140/90** or less is normal. The number above the line is the pressure that the blood reaches on each heartbeat. The number below the line is the pressure between beats.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE IS HIGH?

If you have high blood pressure for long periods of time, it puts extra strain on your **heart** and **arteries**. It also puts extra strain on the fine blood vessels in areas like your **kidneys**, **eyes** and **brain**.

This extra pressure can lead to:

- a stroke
- a heart attack
- kidney damage
- eye damage

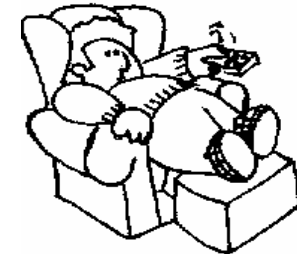
If you are a diabetic, you need to get your treatment for high blood pressure, because diabetes can also cause damage to your blood vessels.

A GOOD CONTROL OF YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT HEART DISEASE

WHAT CAUSES HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

In most cases we do not know what causes high blood pressure, but high blood pressure tends to run in families. And the chances of getting high blood pressure increase as you get older. There are other factors which can add to the chances of you getting high blood pressure and these include:

- Not taking enough exercise



- Being overweight
- Stress
- Tobacco



- Drinking too much



- Having too much salt in your diet

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE?

If you want to reduce your blood pressure, **lose weight** and **take more exercise**. To help you lose weight, do some sort of physical activity for about 20 to 30 minutes, two or three times a week. Swimming, cycling and walking are all excellent ways of exercising.

If you smoke, stop. Although you may find this difficult, it will be worth it.

Cut out alcohol, or reduce the amount you drink to one or two drinks a day.

Reduce how much salt you eat. Don't add salt to your food with 'hidden' salt such as tinned and frozen foods.

If you can do all the things mentioned above, you could lose your blood pressure problem or at least reduce the need for medication.



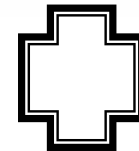
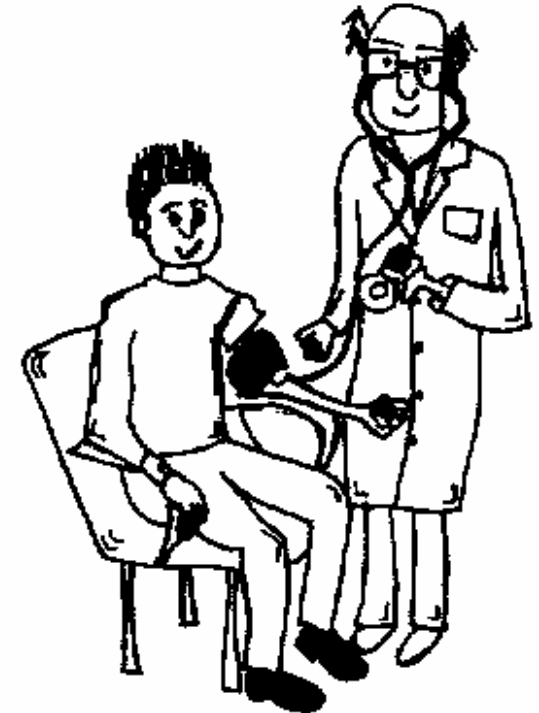
WHAT TREATMENT MAY YOUR DOCTOR PRESCRIBE?

- To begin with your GP may not give you anything to treat your high blood pressure. Often modifications to the diet and exercise, stopping smoking improves the blood pressure levels. If to the contrary then your doctor may prescribe just one or a few of the tablets listed below.
 - Diuretics
 - Beta blockers
 - Calcium antagonists
 - Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors
 - Angiotensin-II receptor antagonists

All of these drugs help to lower blood pressure, but not all of them suit everyone. This means that if one treatment causes you problems, your doctor may want to prescribe another drug for you, which may suit you better.

It is very important that you do not stop taking your medication without talking to your doctor first.

HYPERTENSION



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