

CONTROLLING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Since 1995, high blood pressure in Alabamians has increased from 24% to 37% of the population.¹ High blood pressure, also called hypertension, increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the leading cause of death in Alabama. Because the consequences of uncontrolled high blood pressure are so serious, early detection, treatment and control are very important. High blood pressure is often called “the silent killer” because it has no symptoms. In fact, high blood pressure is the most important risk factor for stroke.

RISK FACTORS FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE ²

- ▶ **Family History of High Blood Pressure**
- ▶ **Age**
- ▶ **Overweight and Obesity**
- ▶ **Inactive Lifestyle**
- ▶ **Cigarette Smoking**
- ▶ **Eating Too Much Salt**
- ▶ **Excessive Alcohol Use**
- ▶ **Ethnic Background**
- ▶ **Stress**
- ▶ **Gender**

WHAT DO THE NUMBERS MEAN?

120

The top number, called the systolic pressure, represents the pressure while the heart is beating.

80

The bottom number, called the diastolic pressure, represents the pressure when the heart is resting between beats.

By looking at both of these numbers, your physician can get an accurate picture of your blood pressure.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE BE? ³

Normal
<120 and <80

Prehypertension
120–139 or 80–89

Hypertension, Stage 1
140–159 or 90–99

Hypertension, Stage 2
≥160 or ≥100

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3. National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, (2003). Seventh report of the joint national committee on prevention, detection, evaluation, and treatment of high blood pressure (JNC7). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH Publication No. 03-5231.
4. National Stroke Association, (2012). Warning signs of stroke, Act F.A.S.T. Retrieved from <http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagenam=SYMP>.
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LIFESTYLE CHANGES CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK

- ▶ Lower and control high blood pressure.
- ▶ Eat less salt and avoid trans fats.
- ▶ Don't smoke.
- ▶ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ▶ Be physically active each day.
- ▶ Manage diabetes.
- ▶ Limit alcohol consumption.
- ▶ Manage stress.

High blood pressure is easily detected and may be managed with changes in lifestyle. If not regulated with these changes, medications are usually prescribed to control high blood pressure.

If you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, it is extremely important to take the medications as prescribed by your physician. Remember, high blood pressure is "the silent killer."

Spot a Stroke **FAST** – Check for Signs and Symptoms⁴

F

FACIAL WEAKNESS - Can the person smile; has his/her mouth or eyes drooped?

A

ARM WEAKNESS - Can the person raise both arms; is one arm slightly lower?

S

SPEECH/SIGHT DIFFICULTY - Can the person speak or see clearly and understand what you say?

T

TIME TO ACT - Time lost is brain lost. **Call 911** immediately if you or a loved one experience any of these warning signs!

PEOPLE WITH UNCONTROLLED HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE ARE⁵

7

times more likely to have a stroke

3

times more likely to develop coronary heart disease

6

times more likely to develop congestive heart failure

2009 ALABAMA DATA

37% of adults reported having high blood pressure

Source: BRFSS 2009

1 IN **3**

ADULTS HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IN THE U.S.



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