

WELL *on your way*

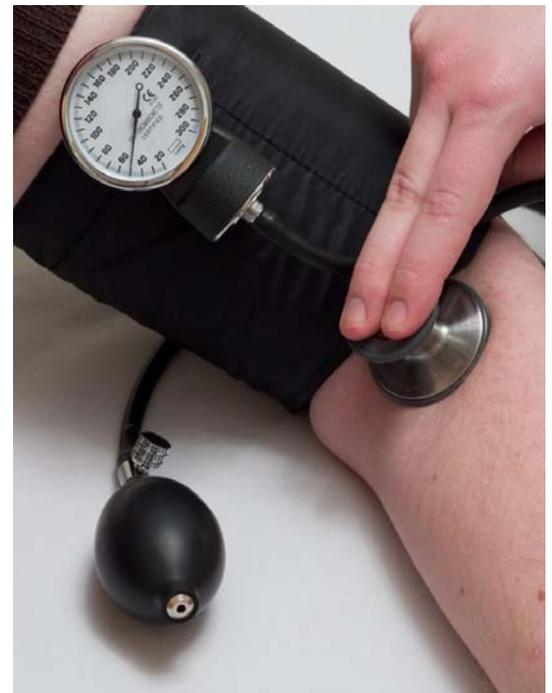
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (Hypertension)

Nearly one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure (hypertension), but because there are no symptoms, nearly one-third of these people don't know they have it. In fact, many people have high blood pressure for years without knowing it. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure or kidney failure. This is why high blood pressure is often called the "silent killer." The only way to tell if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked. A blood pressure test is quick and painless and can be done in a doctor's office, hospital clinic, school, nurse's office, company clinic or at a health fair.

Your heart beats about 60 to 80 times a minute under normal conditions. Your blood pressure rises with each heart-beat and falls when your heart relaxes between beats. Your blood pressure can change from minute to minute, with changes in posture, exercise or sleeping, but it should normally be less than 120/80 mm Hg for an adult. Blood pressure that stays between 120–139/80–89 is considered pre-hypertension and above this level (140/90 mm Hg or higher) is considered high (hypertension).

DID YOU KNOW?

- About 72 million people in the United States age 20 and older have high blood pressure.
- Nearly one in three adults has high blood pressure.
- Of those people with high blood pressure, 71.8 percent were aware of their condition.
- Of all people with high blood pressure, 61.4 percent were under current treatment, 35.1 percent had it under control, and 64.9 percent did not have it controlled.
- High blood pressure is easily detected and usually controllable.
- From 1994 to 2004 the death rate from high blood pressure increased 15.5 percent, and the actual number of deaths rose 41.8 percent.
- Non-Hispanic blacks are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure than are non-Hispanic whites.
- Within the African-American community, those with the highest rates of hypertension are more likely to be middle-aged or older, overweight or obese, physically inactive, and to have diabetes.
- In 2004 the death rates per 100,000 population from high blood pressure were 15.6 for white males, 49.9 for black males, 14.3 for white females and 40.6 for black females.



NEED ADDITIONAL HELP?

Piedmont Community Health Plan along with our network of local participating physicians has programs to help patients deal with hypertension through dietary changes, lifestyle modifications and medicinal therapies. Left untreated, high blood pressure is the No. 1 risk factor for stroke. It also contributes to heart attacks, heart failure, kidney failure and atherosclerosis (fatty buildups in arteries). In some cases, it can even cause blindness. But it is also a very treatable condition.

If you think you have high blood pressure, please consult with your Piedmont Network physician or call us at (434) 947-4463 or (800) 400-7247.

** Above information obtained from American Heart Association.*

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