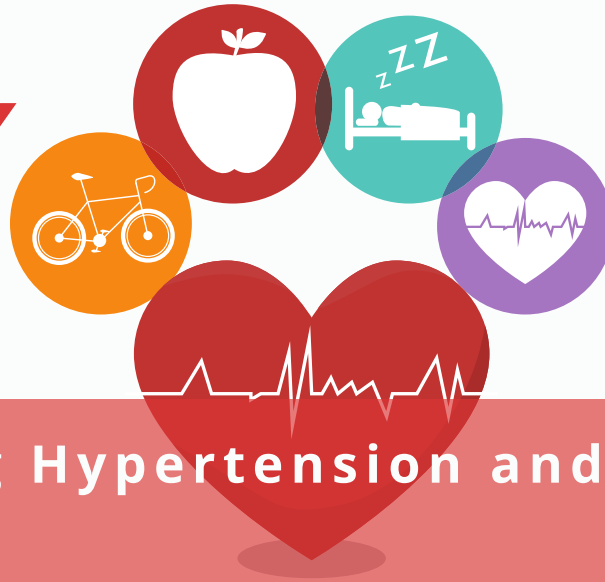


# HAPPY HEALTHY HEART



**KANIKSU**  
COMMUNITY HEALTH

## Understanding Hypertension and High Blood Pressure

### WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Blood is a fluid superhero that zips around our body via blood vessels known as arteries. These heroic arteries are responsible for delivering oxygen and energy to every organ in our body!

But wait, there's a villain lurking: high blood pressure. This sneaky foe, affecting around 75 million folks in the US, can increase the risk of heart disease and other cardiovascular nasties. In fact, in 2017-2018, about one-third of all people above the age of 20 had high blood pressure ratings and many were taking antihypertensive medications to keep things in check.

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is a grave health concern that impacts nearly 1 billion people globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that this number may increase to approximately 1.57 billion by 2025, according to a recent analysis.

Hypertension is like a pesky house guest that overstays their welcome. It's when your blood pressure is sky-high, and you're feeling the heat of stress. When your BP is above 140/90 mm, it's time to show hypertension the door. Doctors measure it by checking your systolic and diastolic pressure - the first number is when your heart pumps blood, and the second is when it relaxes and refills.

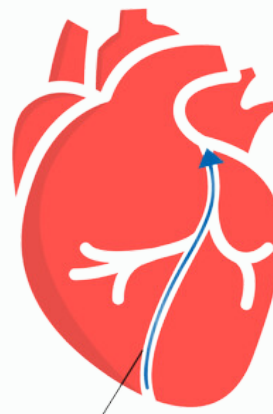
### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF HYPERTENSION

Hypertension is a sneaky foe, lurking in the shadows with no apparent warning signs. That's why it's earned the nickname "the silent killer" since it can silently harm your heart and blood vessels.

If left unchecked, hypertension can even wreak havoc on your organs and lead to arteriosclerosis, where plaques narrow your blood vessels. Yikes!

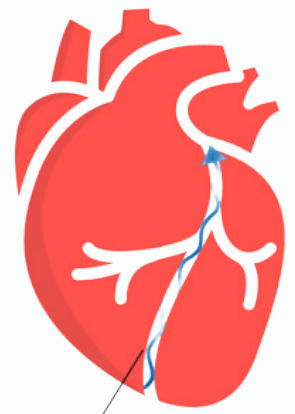
If your systolic blood pressure hits 180 mmHg or higher, and the diastolic blood pressure reaches 110 mmHg or higher, then you're facing a hypertensive crisis that requires urgent medical care.

**No Hypertension**  
Heart Pumping Normally



Blood flows easily through vessels

**Hypertension**  
Heart Pumping Harder



Blood may not flow easily through vessels



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## HOW DOES HYPERTENSION HAPPEN?

When talking about hypertension, there are two types:

- Primary hypertension (aka essential hypertension): the most common form without any known cause.
- Secondary hypertension: caused by an underlying illness or medication. This type has been linked to diseases like thyroid dysfunction, sleep apnea, or diabetes. Even certain chemicals like amphetamines, antidepressants, and caffeine can cause hypertension.

When it comes to skyrocketing blood pressure, stress and unfavorable environments are the usual suspects for even the healthiest folks. Sadly, the surge in this condition is often the result of our less-than-healthy habits such as lounging around, chowing down on salty, fatty fast food, and indulging in nicotine and alcohol.

## PREVENTION AND TESTING

Let's get to the heart of hypertension diagnosis. Typically, a doctor will whip out a sphygmomanometer to measure your blood pressure, and if they catch at least three high readings, it's time to diagnose. But, that's not all! Further tests like kidney ultrasounds, urine and blood tests, and even an electrocardiogram (also known as an ECG test) can help identify the root of the high blood pressure issue and any other related health hiccups.

## Blood Pressure Categories



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
<b>NORMAL</b>	<b>LESS THAN 120</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>LESS THAN 80</b>
<b>ELEVATED</b>	<b>120 – 129</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>LESS THAN 80</b>
<b>HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1</b>	<b>130 – 139</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>80 – 89</b>
<b>HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2</b>	<b>140 OR HIGHER</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>90 OR HIGHER</b>
<b>HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)</b>	<b>HIGHER THAN 180</b>	<b>and/or</b>	<b>HIGHER THAN 120</b>

## TAKE CHARGE OF HYPERTENSION

Here are a few tips for your happy, healthy, heart:

- Shedding extra pounds through a mix of diet and exercise can work wonders, as high blood pressure and obesity are linked.
- Nourish your body with a wholesome diet that includes whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products.
- Ditch foods that are high in LDL cholesterol (low-density lipoprotein).
- Cut back on sodium intake by tweaking your diet.
- Pump up your calcium and vitamin D intake.
- Unchecked hypertension can be a ticking time bomb, but fret not! Regular exercise, coupled with a low-sodium diet, and potassium and calcium-rich foods can keep blood pressure in check. Stock up on low-fat protein, whole grains, and plenty of fruits and veggies to keep a Happy Healthy Heart!

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