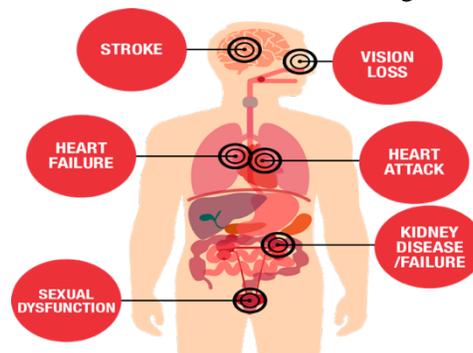


LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS TO MANAGE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

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About half of all adults in the US have elevated blood pressure; of these, only 25% have their blood pressure under control. Blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels as the blood is pumped by the heart. The American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology define high blood pressure as that above 130/90.

The first number (systolic blood pressure) measures the force created as the blood pumps out of the heart and pushes against the blood vessels, called arteries. The second number (diastolic pressure) measures the time heart rests between heart beats. Blood circulates around the body for normal function of our organs. A high blood pressure causes harm by increasing the work of the heart and blood vessels, making them work harder and less efficiently. Over time, this damages the inside lining of the vessels. Potential damage of high blood pressure includes heart failure, kidney disease or failure, stroke, vision loss, heart attack, and sexual dysfunction. (See illustration.) High blood pressure is often called a silent killer because, initially, one may not feel anything as the damage is happening. Some symptoms of high blood pressure include headaches, shortness of breath, visual changes, chest pain, dizziness, and flushing.



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

Healthy diets have been linked to a risk reduction in the development or progression of high blood pressure, kidney disease, high blood sugar, and high lipids. Physical activity, stopping smoking, reduction of alcohol consumption, stress management, and maintaining a healthy weight have all been linked to a reduction in elevated blood pressure and ongoing maintenance of normal blood pressure. Aim to eat more fruits and vegetables, less red meat, less salt and more fiber/whole grain foods. Work on decreasing portions and increasing physical activities. Regular exercise (about 30 minutes a day) is very important for your health and is recommended.



So, check your blood pressure regularly, maintain a healthy diet, be active most days, do not use tobacco, limit alcohol consumption, manage your stress, maintain a healthy weight, and follow doctor's orders to prevent high blood pressure from damaging your health.