

# HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

## What You **Need to Know** About the **“Silent Killer”**

*High blood pressure is often called the silent killer. You can't feel or see it, but it has a big effect on your body. Get checked regularly. Learn how to control it.*

### **WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

Your heart pumps blood to all parts of your body. Blood travels through pathways in our body. The blood pushes on the walls of these pathways. If the blood pushes too hard it can cause high blood pressure and damage your body. High blood pressure puts you at higher risk for heart problems, stroke and kidney problems.

About one in three people who have high blood pressure don't know they have it. That is why it is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly. High blood pressure can be treated.

Your blood pressure is shown by two numbers. The first number measures the force of blood while the heart is pumping. This is also called systolic blood pressure. The second number measures the force between beats. This is called diastolic blood pressure. For normal blood pressure, the first number should be less than 120. The second number should be less than 80.

### **WHO GETS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

High blood pressure is the most common heart health problem. It gets more common as you get older. More men have it than women. You are more likely to get it if you are overweight or if someone else in your family has it.

### **PREVENTION AND TREATMENT**

You can delay or lower high blood pressure by changing your health habits:

- ▶ Eat healthy
- ▶ Adults should exercise at least two and a half hours each week and work out their muscles at least twice a week
- ▶ Kids should exercise at least one hour each day
- ▶ Keep your weight at a healthy level
- ▶ Don't smoke
- ▶ Learn to cope with stress

Sometimes doing these things is enough. Often, you will also need to take one, two or more kinds of pills. High blood pressure is a lifetime condition. You can control it, but it will not go away. See your doctor for regular check-ups to keep your blood pressure at healthy levels.

You can control your blood pressure so it does not control you.