

SUPRA HOME HEALTH, INC.

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HYPERTENSION

WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension or **high blood pressure** is a condition in which the blood pressure in the arteries is chronically elevated. If the pressure is too high, the heart has to work harder to pump, and this could lead to organ damage and several illnesses such as heart attack, stroke, heart failure, aneurysm, or renal failure

WHAT CAUSES HYPERTENSION?

Though the exact causes of hypertension are usually unknown, there are several factors that have been highly associated with the condition. These include:

- Smoking
- Obesity or being overweight
- Diabetes
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Lack of physical activity
- High levels of salt intake (sodium sensitivity)
- Insufficient calcium, potassium, and magnesium consumption
- Vitamin D deficiency
- High levels of alcohol consumption
- Stress
- Aging
- Medicines such as birth control pills
- Genetics and a family history of hypertension
- Chronic kidney disease
- Adrenal and thyroid problems or tumors



HOW IS HYPERTENSION DIAGNOSED?

Hypertension may be diagnosed by a health professional who measures blood pressure with a device called a **sphygmomanometer** - the device with the arm cuff, dial, pump, and valve. The systolic and diastolic numbers will be recorded and compared to a chart of values. If the pressure is **greater than 140/90**, you will be considered to have hypertension. A high blood pressure measurement, however, may be spurious or the result of stress at the time of the exam. In order to perform a more thorough diagnosis, physicians usually conduct a physical exam and ask for the medical history of you and your family. Doctors will need to know if you have any of the risk factors for hypertension, such as smoking, high cholesterol, or diabetes.

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WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS & SIGNS OF HYPERTENSION?

- **Severe headaches**
- **Fatigue or confusion**
- **Dizziness**
- **Nausea**
- **Problems with vision**
- **Chest pains**
- **Breathing problems**
- **Irregular heartbeat**
- **Blood in the urine**

There is no guarantee that a person with hypertension will present any symptoms of the condition. About 33% of people actually do not know that they have high blood pressure, and this ignorance can last for years. For this reason, it is advisable to undergo periodic blood pressure screenings even when no symptoms are present.

HOW IS HYPERTENSION TREATED?

The main goal of treatment for hypertension is to lower blood pressure to less than 140/90 - or even lower in some groups such as people with diabetes, and people with chronic kidney diseases. Treating hypertension is important for reducing the risk of stroke, heart attack, and heart failure.

High blood pressure may be treated medically, by changing lifestyle factors, or a combination of the two. Important lifestyle changes include losing weight, quitting smoking, eating a healthful diet, reducing sodium intake, exercising regularly, and limiting alcohol consumption.

Medical options to treat hypertension include several classes of drugs. ACE inhibitors, ARB drugs, beta-blockers, diuretics, calcium channel blockers, alpha-blockers, and peripheral vasodilators are the primary drugs used in treatment. These medications may be used alone or in combination, and some are only used in combination. In addition, some of these drugs are preferred to others depending on the characteristics of the patient (diabetic, pregnant, etc.).

If blood pressure is successfully lowered, it is wise to have frequent checkups and to take preventive measures to avoid a relapse of hypertension.