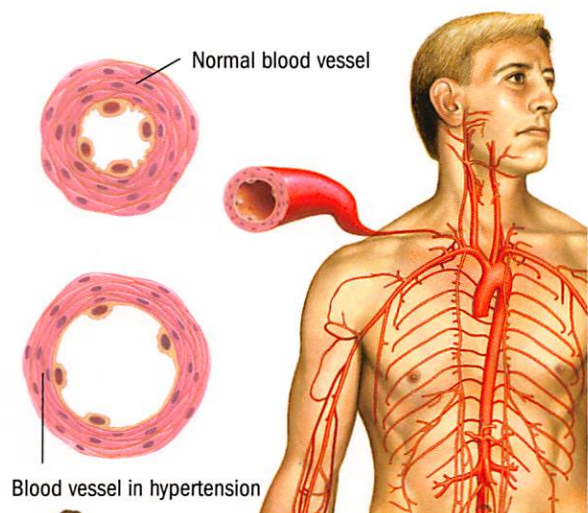


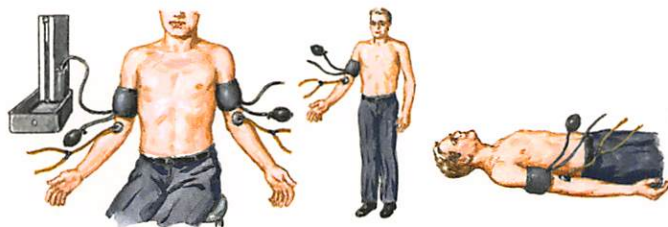
MANAGING YOUR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION)



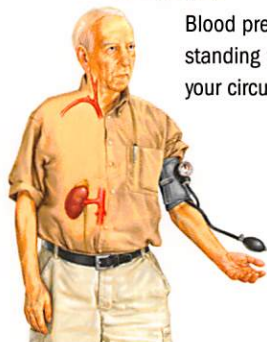
Blood vessel in hypertension



People with obesity and women taking oral contraceptives are at risk for hypertension. More than half of all Americans age 65 and older have high blood pressure ($\geq 140/90$ mm Hg)



Blood pressure may be checked while lying down, standing up, and in both arms to learn more about your circulation.



High blood pressure is a risk factor for heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

What Is Hypertension?

Blood pressure is the force of the blood pushing against artery walls. Blood pressure is given as two numbers. The systolic pressure is the top number, and the diastolic pressure is the bottom number. Both are recorded as mm Hg (millimeters of mercury), which tells how high a column of mercury is raised by the pressure. Normal values are usually 120/80. The American Heart Association defines hypertension for adults as 140 mm Hg or higher systolic and/or 90 mm Hg or higher diastolic. These numbers should be used as a guide only.

What Causes Blood Pressure to Increase?

Being overweight, excessive salt (sodium) intake, some medications, and lack of physical activity contribute to hypertension.

What Are the Risk Factors for Hypertension?

More than half of all Americans age 65 and older have hypertension. People with obesity, diabetes, gout, or kidney disease; heavy drinkers of alcohol; and women taking birth control pills are at increased risk. African Americans (especially those living in southeastern United States) and people with parents or grandparents with hypertension have an increased risk.

What Are the Symptoms of Hypertension?

People usually have no or only mild vague symptoms. Severe hypertension can produce headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, nausea, ringing in the ears, confusion, and fatigue.

How Is Hypertension Diagnosed?

Hypertension is diagnosed only if blood pressure is high during at least three office visits. The doctor may check blood pressure in lying down and standing up positions, and in both arms.

What Are the Complications of Hypertension?

Untreated hypertension strains the heart and arteries and in time damages them. Hypertension is a key risk factor for heart failure, heart attack (myocardial infarction), stroke, and eye or kidney damage.