**High Blood Pressure**

## What is high blood pressure?

## Blood flows from your heart to the body in blood vessels called arteries.

## Arteries are smooth and flexible, allowing blood to easily flow through them.

## As blood moves through these arteries, it puts a pressure on the artery walls.

## In patients with high blood pressure (hypertension), the blood flows through arteries at a higher than normal pressure.

## The top number (called systolic pressure) is the highest pressure in your arteries as your heart is beating and pushing blood out. The bottom number (called diastolic pressure) is the pressure in your arteries when the heart is relaxing and filling with more blood.

## What causes high blood pressure?

* A combination of any of the following factors may lead to high blood pressure

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| --- | --- |
| * Diets high in fat and cholesterol
 | * Not exercising enough
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| * Being overweight or obese
 | * Family history of hypertension
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| * Tobacco use
 | * Stress
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| * Some birth control products
 | * Kidney or hormone problems
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**What are the symptoms of constipation?**

## Usually having high blood pressure does not cause other problems, so it’s important to have it checked regularly.

## How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

* A special pressure monitor is used at the doctor’s office to measure the pressure in your arteries.
* If you are started on blood pressure medication, your healthcare provider may ask you to return frequently to have your pressure checked, or they may ask you to buy an automated cuff to use at home.

**How is high blood pressure treated?**

* Initial treatment typically begins with lifestyle changes including:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Don’t smoke or use tobacco
 | * Lose weight if you’re overweight
 |
| * Exercise regularly
 | * Limit sodium, alcohol, and caffeine use
 |
| * Eat healthy including lots of fruits and vegetables
 | * Try relaxation techniques
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* If you’ve tried all of these approaches, and your blood pressure remains high, you will likely need to take a medication to control the problem. Your healthcare provider will help you choose the best medication for your situation.

**What if I don’t treat my high blood pressure?**

* Long-term high blood pressure puts you at a higher risk for stroke, heart disease, heart attacks, and kidney failure.