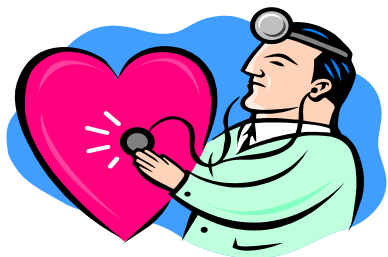
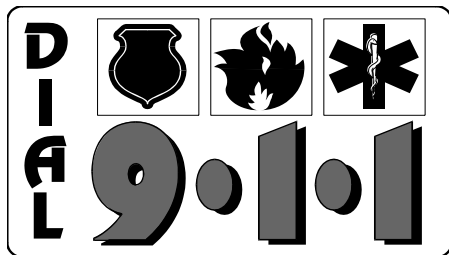


About High Blood Pressure



MIAMI VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
2710 Lyons Rd
Miamisburg, OH 45342
Fire Headquarters/non-emergency
937-560-2152

www.miamivalleyfiredistrict.org
e-mail:
emsfire@miamivalleyfiredistrict.org



What's Blood Pressure?

When your heart beats, it pumps blood into your arteries and creates pressure in them. This pressure (**blood pressure**) causes your blood to flow to all parts of your body. Your blood beats about 60 to 80 times a minute under normal conditions. With each beat, it sends a surge of blood into your arteries. That makes the blood pressure in your arteries go up. On the other hand, your blood pressure goes down when your heart relaxes between beats

What's High Blood Pressure?






Your doctor records two numbers when measuring your blood pressure. The first number is (**systolic pressure**) measures the pressure in your arteries generated while your heart is beating. The second number (**diastolic pressure**) measures the pressure while your heart is resting between beats. Normal blood pressure falls within a range; it's not one set of numbers. But it should be less than 140/90 if you're an adult. If your blood pressure goes above this threshold and stays there, you have high blood pressure. Your blood pressure can change from minute to minute, with changes in posture, exercise or sleeping.

What Causes High Blood Pressure?

Although researchers haven't discovered specific causes, they've learned of some factors that increase the chance that a person will develop high blood pressure. These are called risk factors.




Control Factors:

Risk factors that can be controlled are:

-  Obesity
-  Eating Too Much Salt
-  Alcohol
-  Lack of Exercise
-  Stress

Uncontrollable Factors

You can't control these factors:

-  Race - Blacks develop high blood pressure more often than whites.
-  Heredity - A tendency to have high blood pressure runs in families. If your parents or other close blood relative had high blood pressure, you're more likely to develop it.
-  Age - In general, the older you get, the greater your chance of developing high blood pressure.

Can you tell when your blood pressure is high?

No, definitely not. High blood pressure has no symptoms. In fact, many people have high blood pressure for years without knowing it. That's why it's so dangerous. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure measured. If you don't have a family doctor or don't know where to go to have your blood pressure checked, stop in at any of the Miami Valley Fire District's Stations, and we will check it for you **FREE**.

How can high blood pressure damage your body?

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can hurt your body in many ways. Mainly, it adds to the workload of your heart and arteries. As you grow older, your arteries will harden and become less elastic. This occurs gradually in all people, regardless of whether they have high blood pressure. But having high blood pressure tends to speed up this process. The risk of stroke (brain attack) also increases if you have high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, follow your doctor's advice. Essential high blood pressure can't be cured, but it usually can be controlled.

People with uncontrolled high blood pressure are:




- ✓ Three times more likely to develop coronary heart disease
- ✓ Six times more likely to develop congestive heart failure
- ✓ Seven times more likely to have a stroke

It's worth repeating: If you're hypertensive, follow your doctor's advice and take your medicine.

Most treatments for high blood pressure rely on some combination of diet, exercise, and medication.

Diet

Often when people lose weight, their blood pressure drops automatically. Being overweight is a general health hazard, so by losing weight you'll not only help your blood pressure, but you'll help yourself stay healthy in other ways. Sometimes reducing sodium consumption can help lower blood pressure. A reduced sodium diet will mean you'll have to:













-  Avoid salty foods
-  Cut down on how much salt you use in cooking and at the table.
-  Start reading package labels regularly to learn about the sodium content of prepared foods.

Exercise and Recreation

Having high blood pressure doesn't mean you have to become an invalid. In fact, more people with controlled blood pressure keep doing their usual activities. Don't be afraid to be active; exercise should definitely be part of your daily program.

Medication

For some people, losing weight, reducing sodium and making other lifestyle changes won't lower high blood pressure enough. If that's true for you, you'll need to take medication. Here are important facts to know about any prescribed medication:

-  The name of the medication and what it's supposed to do
-  How often to take it
-  How much to take
-  How long to take it
-  How to store it (does the medicine need to be in a cool place)
-  If there's a specific time of day it should be taken
-  If there are foods, drinks, other medications or activities to avoid while on the drug
-  What results, reactions or side effects you might expect from the medication, and what to do if you have reactions or side effects
-  If there is any written information you can have to help you remember key points about the drug
-  What to do in case you miss a dose
-  The medications relationship to pregnancy
-  What to do if you get sick from something else or have to go to the hospital.