

# High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)

## What is it?

High blood pressure is excessive pressure beyond the level that is needed to comfortably push the blood around the body. You will hear two readings quoted; the **systolic** which is the higher level and the **diastolic** which is less.

The ideal levels for people vary with age and presence of other medical conditions. Generally the levels should be below 140 for systolic and 90 for diastolic.

## What causes it?

High blood pressure is usually a preprogrammed or genetic condition. It may therefore occur in many members of a family. Rarely it can be caused by other diseases such as narrowed kidney arteries, diseases of the kidneys or rarely gland disorders. These rare conditions can include adrenalin producing tumours.

## What are the risks?

High blood pressure puts the arteries under additional strain which can lead to wear and tear problems and even after many years or under extreme circumstances, lead to their rupture. The wear and tear on arteries can lead to heart attacks, strokes or poor circulation.

## How do you treat it?

If there is a rare correctable disorder, the treatment of this will often return pressure to normal. However, in the majority of patients tablets are usually required. Simple measures such as weight loss, regular exercise (walking for 45 minutes three times a week) will help significantly.

There are many different types of tablet and some of these will agree with you and others wont. It may take a few tries to find the ideal medication for you.

The types of tablets include ACE inhibitors (Capoten, Renitec, Accupril, Zestril, Ramace, Monopril, ), AT blockers (Candesartan, Atacand, Avapro, Micardis) Betablockers (Betaloc, Tenormin), Calcium blockers (Norvasc, Plendil, Adalat, Isoptin, Cardizem), Fluid tablets (Moduretic, Natrilix, Chlotride) and less commonly older tablets such as Minipress or Aldomet.

**Hypertension is common and generally very benign when treated effectively.**