

High Blood Pressure: “The Silent Killer”

By Daniel Schlosser, MD

Hypertension is the word we use to describe high blood pressure. Normal blood pressure is defined as systolic (top number) less than 120, and diastolic (lower number) less than 80 in people 18 and older. Pre-hypertension is a condition that exists with blood pressures averaging from 121 to 139 systolic, or 81 to 89 diastolic. Blood pressure consistently greater than 140/90 at rest is considered hypertensive.

Blood pressure varies normally throughout the day depending on your activities, and a diagnosis of hypertension, or a decision to treat hypertension should never be based on a single reading. Readings should be taken in a seated position after a period of rest. Those taken in the office may be higher than you might find at home, a condition called “White Coat Syndrome” due to the anxiety of seeing your doctor. High readings in the office setting are often followed up with checking your blood pressure at home. Readings that average greater

than 135/85 at home are considered hypertensive.

Hypertension is an issue because it does not cause any symptoms initially. Most people will never know they have it without having their blood pressure checked, either in a physician’s office or during a health fair screening. Despite the lack of symptoms, over time it causes damage to blood vessels and increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney disease, eye disease and peripheral vascular disease. It is the most common single diagnosis in America. Unfortunately up to one third of people with hypertension are not aware they have it.

“Secondary” hypertension has an underlying cause such as sleep apnea, hormonal imbalance or renal artery stenosis and is treated by addressing the underlying problem. This, however, is very rare, and most blood pressure elevations are due to “essential” hypertension and treated with lifestyle changes, and or medication.

Lifestyle modifications include changing to a low fat, low sodium diet, increased exercise with moderate activity for 30 min most days of the week, weight loss if appropriate, tobacco cessation and limited use of alcohol. Patients may require medication depending on their response to lifestyle changes, the severity of the elevation, or the existence of other factors that may also raise the risk of cardiovascular disease such as high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, age, tobacco use or prior cardiovascular events. People often require more than one medication to achieve appropriate control of their blood pressure.

Hypertension is a chronic condition and generally requires long-term treatment. Those who stop taking their medications once their blood pressure improves, will simply watch it go back up.

If you have any questions on managing high blood pressure, talk with your provider at your next visit.

Welcome Dr. Schlosser!

Thunderbird Internal Medicine is proud to welcome Dr. Daniel Schlosser to our practice at the Indian School Road location. A board certified internist, Dr. Schlosser earned his doctorate from the University of Kansas School of Medicine and completed his residency at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Phoenix. Since then, he has worked as a hospitalist. He, along with Dr. Tatera and Dr. Yu, will see patients at our 9150 W. Indian School Road, suite 118 office.



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