



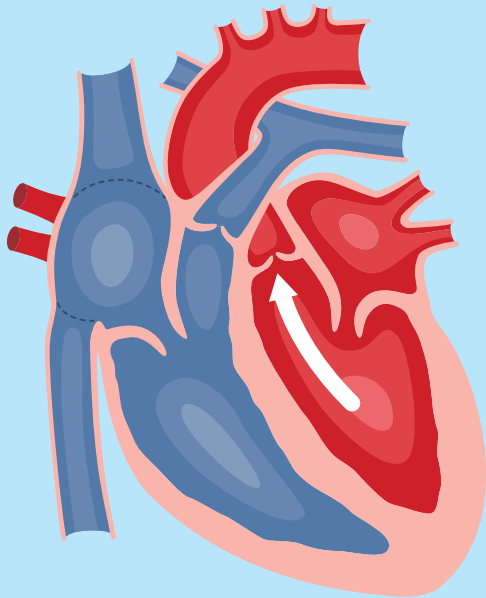
What is hypertension?

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, occurs when the blood pushing against blood vessel walls generates a force that is considered higher than normal. The heart must work harder to pump blood through the blood vessels. If the blood pressure (systolic/diastolic) is above 130/80 mmHg, it is considered high. For reference, systolic blood pressure (the first number) describes the pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when the heart beats. Diastolic blood pressure (the second number) describes the pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when the heart is at rest in between beats.

According to the CDC, nearly half of adults in the United States (108 million, or 45%) have hypertension defined as a systolic blood pressure ≥ 130 mm Hg or a diastolic blood pressure ≥ 80 mm Hg or are taking medication for hypertension. Long-standing hypertension causes the heart to work harder to push blood throughout the body. Individuals with hypertension may have no symptoms, however, the condition can lead to damage in the heart, brain, or kidneys. Poorly controlled blood pressure can also lead to heart failure, heart attack, or stroke.

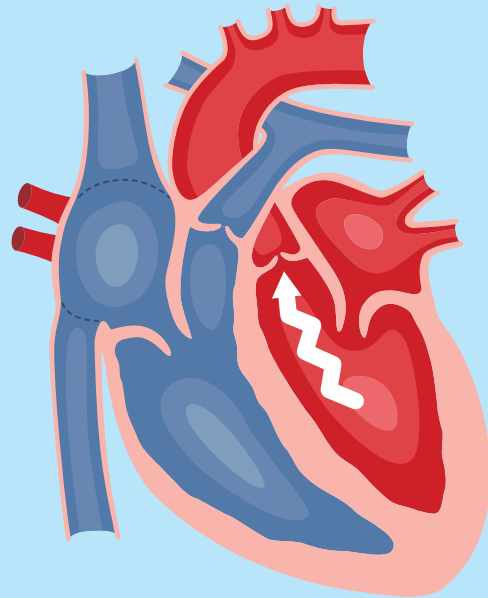
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Normal



**Blood flows easily
through vessels**

Hypertension



**Blood may not flow
easily through vessels**

Controlling blood pressure is the best step in the prevention of heart diseases or complications. In most cases, health care providers will suggest lifestyle modifications before prescribing medication to individuals with a blood pressure considered higher than normal. This may include actions such as maintaining a healthy weight, eating healthier, reducing sodium intake, increasing physical activity, and limiting alcohol. If lifestyle changes alone fail to lower an individual's blood pressure, the health care provider may opt to use a multimodal approach that includes medication therapy in addition to the suggested lifestyle changes.

The most common medication used to treat hypertension include angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs), angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs), calcium channel blockers (CCBs), and diuretics. Many people do not know they have hypertension, and even among those who

do, many do not have it controlled well enough. Therefore, it is important for patients to partner with their health care provider and pharmacist to successfully manage their blood pressure and lead healthier lives.



References

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