

Hypertension

The damage of high blood pressure starts in your heart and arteries

Chronic Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a very manageable condition that is most common in older adults.

The most significant way that high blood pressure causes damage is by raising the load on the heart and blood vessels—making them work harder and less efficiently.

Over time, the force and friction of high blood pressure harms the delicate tissues inside the arteries, eventually shrinking the arteries making the heart struggle to circulate blood. This can lead to other conditions that range from arrhythmia to stroke and heart attack.¹

“Hypertension is a known risk factor for heart attacks and stroke,” according to Matthew Sorrentino, MD, a Chicago cardiologist and one of the medical experts at Best Doctors. “The absolute risk for a heart attack or stroke will be dependent on the age of the patient, how long hypertension has been present, and the degree of elevation of blood pressure,” he added.

Usually, hypertension is defined as blood pressure above 130/80 and is considered severe if the pressure is above 180/120. The symptoms of high blood pressure can often be related to other health problems, so that diagnosis of hypertension is sometimes a challenge for healthcare providers.

As with many conditions, lifestyle considerations are central to the management of high blood pressure. Eating a healthier diet with less salt, exercising regularly, and taking medications can help lower blood pressure.

Common symptoms

- Severe headache
- Fatigue or confusion
- Vision problems
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Irregular heartbeat
- Blood in the urine
- Pounding in your chest, neck, or ears

While there is no cure for hypertension, lifestyle and medication are the keys to making it more manageable. And because it is so common and includes symptoms of other conditions, your Best Doctors benefits can be a valuable tool in your approach to your general health and wellness. With a consulting staff of the top medical experts worldwide, Best Doctors can give you the peace of mind that comes from an objective and thorough second opinion.

¹<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/the-facts-about-high-blood-pressure/what-is-high-blood-pressure>

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