

## What Can You Do To Lower Blood Pressure?

- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Exercise regularly (4-5 times weekly).
- Eat a healthy diet—at least 5 portions of varied fruit/veg daily.
- Reduce fatty foods.
- Use low fat, mono or polyunsaturated spreads.
- Include 2-3 portions of fish per week. Aim for oily fish (mackerel, sardines, kippers, salmon)
- Eat lean meat or poultry.
- Use olive oil if you have to use oil.
- Try not to add salt to food.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- **STOP SMOKING**—make every effort—help is available at our practice, please ask at reception.

## Tests

You will be asked to have blood and urine tests. This is to assess if the raised blood pressure has affected the heart and to exclude other causes of raised blood pressure.

## Treatment

There are several medicines that can lower blood pressure. The one chosen depends on such things as:

- If you have other medical problems.
- If you take other medication.
- Possible side effects.
- Your age.

One treatment can reduce blood pressure to below the target level in about half of cases. However it is quite common to need two or more different medicines to achieve this. You may also be advised to take cholesterol lowering medication and a daily dose of Aspirin—please feel free to discuss this with your doctor.

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**CUMBERLAND HOUSE**

**PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CENTRE**

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**  
**Information for people with**  
**high blood pressure**  
**& for their families & friends.**

If you would like this leaflet in larger text please ask

## What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure (hypertension) means that the pressure of the blood in your arteries (blood vessels) is too high. Blood pressure is recorded as two figures.

The top (first) number is the SYSTOLIC pressure—this is the pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts.

The bottom (second) number is the DIASTOLIC pressure—this is the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between each heart beat. Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg)

### TARGET BLOOD PRESSURE

FOR ADULTS THE TARGET IS

Systolic— **140 / 85** — Diastolic

IF YOU HAVE DIABETES YOUR  
TARGET IS BELOW **130 / 80**

## Why Me?

You are not alone! Nearly one in four adults in the UK has high blood pressure. You are luckier than many because often people do not know they have it and then their health is at risk.

## What Causes High Blood Pressure?

The cause is not known in most cases—it is then called essential hypertension. Rarely, high blood pressure can be caused by other conditions for example certain kidney problems.

## How is High Blood Pressure Diagnosed?

A one off reading which is high does not mean that you have a high 'BP' - you BP varies throughout the day. It may be high for a short time if you are anxious, stress or have just been exercising. You are said to have high BP (hypertension) if you have several readings which are high and which are taken on different occasions and when you are relaxed.

## Why is High Blood Pressure (BP) a Problem?

High BP usually causes no symptoms which is why all adults should have their BP checked every 3-5 years. However, over the years, high BP may do some damage to the arteries and put a strain on the heart. High blood pressure is a risk factor for developing heart disease (angina; heart attack; heart failure) stroke, circulation problems and kidney damage at some time in the future. Other risk factors which also increase the risk of developing these are:

- **Smoking.**
- **Lack of exercise.**
- **An unhealthy diet.**
- **Excess alcohol.**
- **Obesity.**
- **High cholesterol level.**
- **A strong family history of heart disease or stroke.**
- **Diabetes.**

## The Benefit of Lowering Blood Pressure

Tests have shown that by reducing your DIASTOLIC blood pressure by 6mmHg therefore you reduce your chances of stroke by approximately 30-40%, reducing the risk of serious illness.