



Bayside Medical Group, Inc.

www.BaysideFamilyPractice.com

FAMILY PRACTICE
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High Blood Pressure

Americans live a lot longer than they used to. Why is that? One important reason is that we now pay a lot more attention to blood pressure (**BP**), and we have lots of ways to help us control it, including lifestyle changes and drugs.

What is blood pressure?

As you know, the heart pumps blood through our arteries to every part of our body (except the cornea of the eye.) The pressure that the heart exerts from pumping the blood is our blood pressure. If it gets too high, the BP can cause damage to the blood vessels that carry the blood, and the organs that receive the blood.

Is high blood pressure common?

Yes, nearly 1 in 3 Americans have it. Occasional high blood pressure is normal if you are anxious, nervous, or have recently exercised. Seeing a nurse or physician may cause this response and is referred to as “white coat syndrome.” Having a *consistently* high blood pressure, however, is another story. Untreated sustained high blood pressure can increase your risk of stroke and heart attack, among other things.

Can we feel it if our BP gets too high?

Not really. That why high BP is called “the silent killer.” You can be walking around, feeling fine, but your high BP can be shortening your life.

So how do we detect our BP?

Easy—you have all done it at one time or another. It is measured by that device (a sphygmomanometer) the health professionals put around your arm. That is the only reliable way to know your BP. For most people, a consistent blood pressure of 140/90 or higher (130/80 or higher if you have diabetes), is considered abnormal.

What if your BP is too high?

In this case, you need to be treated. There are two basic treatments—change your lifestyle, and/or take medicines. The lifestyle changes are easy to say and hard to do! More exercise, less weight, eating healthier foods, no smoking, often less alcohol. All good things to try, especially the no smoking. But not easy.

In addition, we are truly blessed with a wide array of effective medicines that can control your BP, and keep you healthy. For these medicines, you need to be seen and monitored by healthcare professionals.

At Bayside, we take your BP and tell you what it is. We advise you on lifestyle changes, and sometimes just making these changes controls the BP enough, so you don't have to take medicines. But if you do need medicines, our clinicians are very careful to give you just the ones that are right for you personally, and to monitor you continually. That way we know you are not under-medicating, nor are you over-medicating, but you are just right.

For more information, see our additional handout, *Ways to Lower Your Blood Pressure*.
Pay attention to your BP! The life you save could be your own.

We pledge not only to care for you, but to care about you.