UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Healthy Living: High Blood Pressure[1]

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ENAFS
Elder Nutrition and Food Safety

What is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is increased pressure of blood on the blood vessels. This creates more work for the heart. Another name for high blood pressure is hypertension. Over 70 million Americans have hypertension and about half of them do not know that they have this health problem.

Hypertension can cause:

- Atherosclerosis (narrowing and hardening of blood vessels)
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Kidney failure
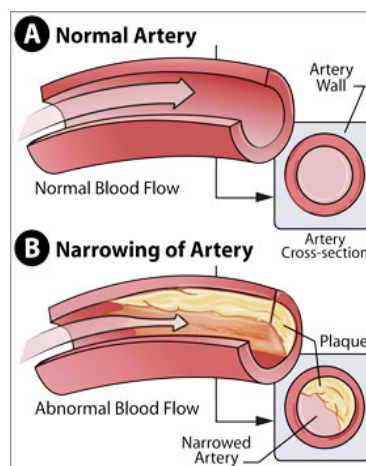- Damage to the eyes

Check Your Risks

You are at higher risk of developing hypertension if you:

- ☐ are African American
- ☐ are a man
- ☐ are 45 years of age or older
- ☐ eat a high salt diet
- ☐ are overweight
- ☐ had a parent with hypertension
- ☐ drink large amounts of alcohol
- ☐ are not physically active

Take a Closer Look

In a normal artery there is room for blood to flow freely.

An artery with atherosclerosis has a build-up of plaque on the artery walls. Atherosclerosis can cause a heart attack or stroke.

Check Your Blood Pressure

Regular blood pressure check-ups help your doctor detect or monitor hypertension. Have your blood pressure checked by a health professional at least once a year. The ENAFS *Keep Track of Your Blood Pressure* log can help you monitor your blood pressure in between doctor visits.