



NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Project ADHERE

Blood Pressure Education Program

Session 1: Blood Pressure 101 (HTN+RD)

Addressing Disparities in Hypertension and Reducing Racial inequity through Engagement

As of February 22, 2024

Objectives

- Understand causes of hypertension
- Learn ways to manage your blood pressure (Slides 14-18)
 - The importance of keeping up with your medications
- Discuss ways to improve the healthcare experience
- Learn strategies to cope with stress

Session 1 Overview: Blood Pressure 101

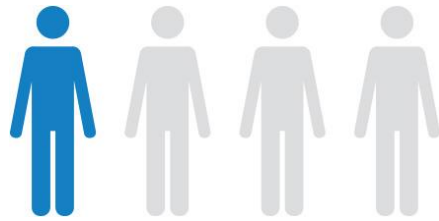
- Today we will discuss:
 - What is hypertension (high blood pressure) and its causes
 - Ways to manage your blood pressure
 - Tips for following up with your primary care provider and improving your healthcare experience

Discuss: What does hypertension mean to you?



How common is hypertension?

Nearly 1 in every 4 New Yorkers has hypertension



Many other New Yorkers have high blood pressure, but don't know it.

- High blood pressure (hypertension) can be overlooked because there are usually **no symptoms**. But it can cause **stroke**, **heart attack** and **early death**.
- Checking your blood pressure regularly helps you know if there is a problem.
- Groups more likely to have high blood pressure include people aged **65 and older**, **Blacks** and **Latinos**

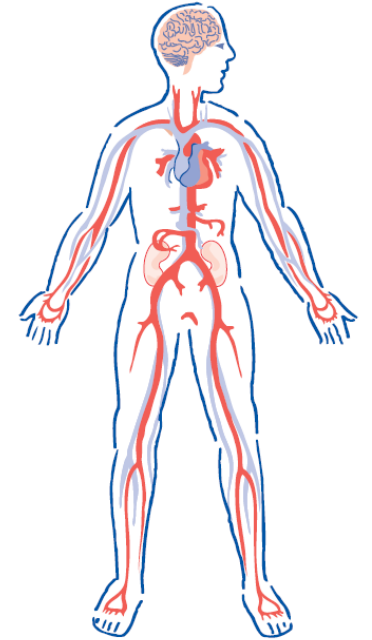
Hypertension Disparities in the Black Community

- 1 Uncontrolled hypertension is a cause of uneven mortality rates between Black and White populations
- 2 **Black Americans have the highest rate of hypertension in the US**
- 3 Compared to Whites, Blacks have:
Higher hypertension: (41.2% vs 28%)
- 4 **Lower hypertension control rates** when compared with Whites (48.5% vs. 55.7%)

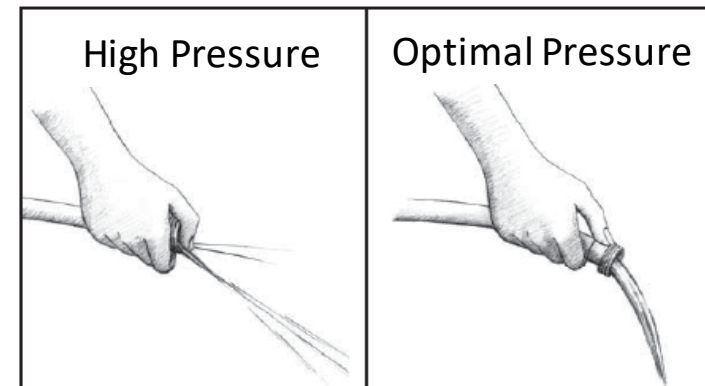
Achieving blood pressure control will prevent downstream unfavorable health conditions (e.g., stroke, heart attack)

What is High Blood Pressure / Hypertension?

- If you have high blood pressure— called “hypertension”—it means your heart has to pump harder than it should to get blood to all parts of your body.
- Hypertension is diagnosed if someone has high blood pressure (higher than 130/80) on two or more doctors visits.

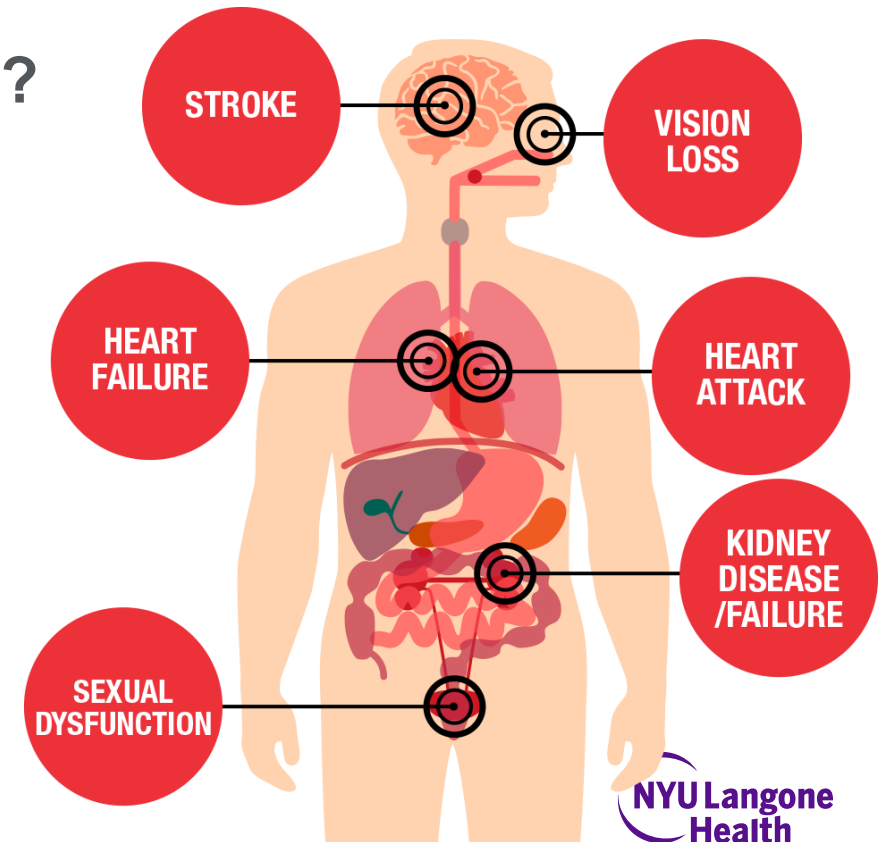


Having high blood pressure and blood vessels that are narrowed or clogged is like turning on a garden hose and holding your thumb over the opening.



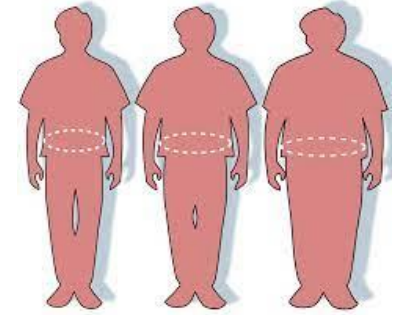
Why is it important to control high blood pressure?

- High Blood pressure is known as a “Silent Killer”
 - There are often **no symptoms...until it is too late** and a person may develop life-threatening problems
- What are the dangers of high blood pressure?
 - Complications may result in:
 - Vision loss
 - Stroke
 - Heart attack
 - Kidney disease/failure
 - Sexual dysfunction
 - Other heart disease



What increases risk for high blood pressure?

- Certain lifestyle choices can increase risk for high blood pressure:
 - **Unhealthy diet** (including high sodium)
 - **Excess Weight / Obesity**
 - **Physical Inactivity**
 - **Alcohol consumption/ smoking**
- Certain conditions can increase risk for high blood pressure:
 - **Diabetes**
- Certain factors and characteristics can increase risk for high blood pressure
 - **Genetics and Family History**
 - **Age** – Blood pressure risk increases as you age.
 - **Race or ethnicity** – Black people develop high blood pressure more than any other group.



Discussion: Measuring Blood Pressure

Are you checking your blood pressure every day?

How is that working out for you?



How can you manage your high blood pressure?



- Make Lifestyle Changes
 - Manage Stress and Get Plenty of Sleep → **Come to Session 2 to learn more!**
 - Eat a Healthy Diet → **Come to Session 3 to learn more!**
 - Be Physically Active → **Come to Session 4 to learn more!**
 - Quit Smoking and Limit Alcohol → **Come to Session 5 to learn more!**
- Take your medication properly (per doctors instructions)



How to Control High Blood Pressure: Blood Pressure Checks/Doctors Visits

- **Regular blood pressure checks**
 - Check your blood pressure regularly at home.
 - Check more often if your blood pressure is not under control and there have been changes to the medications.
- **Regular calls with a nurse and doctor visits**
 - These are important so doctors can properly adjust medicines.
 - Discuss your home blood pressure readings with a nurse or your doctor.
 - See your doctor at least **every 3 months if your blood pressure is uncontrolled** or if there have been changes to your medication

How to Control High Blood Pressure: Medication

- If lifestyle changes are not be enough to lower blood pressure, **medications can be effective.**
- Different medications work for different people. Sometimes people need to take more than one medication to get their blood pressure under control.
- Do NOT stop taking your medicine if you feel better or your blood pressure goes below 140/90. That means the medicine is working!
- A healthy diet and regular physical activity will help your medicine work better.

Discussion: Taking your Medicine



- What is it like for you to take your prescribed blood pressure medication?
 - What are the advantages of taking your blood pressure medications?
 - What are the disadvantages / side effects of taking your blood pressure medications?
- Are you using **alternative supplements (such as herbal remedies, teas, foods, or pills other than your blood pressure medications)** to control your blood pressure?
 - If so, how is that working for you?
 - Before using alternative methods, please discuss this with your primary physician

Preparing for your doctor's visit

- Doctors visits are short
 - you might only have 15 minutes to speak with your doctor.
- Make the most of your limited time
 - come prepared so you can effectively discuss your concerns and ask questions
- Write down all your questions for the doctor in advance and bring a pen and paper, or smartphone, to jot down answers and take notes.
- Make and bring a list of symptoms if you're not feeling well.
- Bring a list of all the medicines you take.
 - Write down the doses and how often you take them.
 - Include vitamins, other supplements, or herbal remedies.
 - Let your doctor know if you are experiencing any side effects.
 - Don't say you are taking a medicine if you're not.

Speak Up

- If you don't understand what the doctor is telling you, ask him or her to explain it again.
- If there are issues you want to discuss that the doctor doesn't mention, raise them yourself.
 - Examples: diet and weight, exercise, stress, sleep, tobacco and alcohol use, vaccines, and tests to find diseases.
- Find out what tests or shots you might need for your age, and ask your doctor about getting them.
- Mention any concerns about your emotional well-being. This affects your physical health and is just as important as any other health problem.
- Don't be embarrassed or ashamed to bring up sensitive topics.

Are you afraid to speak up at the doctor? Why?

Discuss: How does your experience at the doctor's office affect you, and how can you advocate for yourself?

- Do you ever feel judgement or hostility / racial discrimination from the office staff or the healthcare providers during your appointment?
 - Do you feel that you are treated differently because you are a person of color? How so?
- What are possible ways to reduce stressful situations when visiting the doctor?
- When do you feel most comfortable at the doctor's office?
- What can help you to improve your healthcare experience?

Taking Care of You: Guided Imagery

What it is: Guided imagery is a technique that is based on the fact that your mind and body are connected.

It focuses and directs your mind and senses on something pleasant to relax you.

How it works: When you are stressed, your mind races because you are thinking about many things, which can add to your stress. The goal is to think about one pleasant thing.

Guided imagery directs your mind and senses onto something specific that you like. This focuses your mind on something pleasant, which can help to decrease the stress you are feeling.

How to do it:

- Find a quiet, private place and sit down in a comfortable position.
- Uncross your arms and legs and rest your feet gently on the floor.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing.
- Start imagining yourself in a place that makes you happy (such as a park).
- Remember what the place *looked like* (sun, water, grass), *smelled like* (flowers, fresh air), *felt like* (the sun on your skin), *sounded like* (leaves blowing, birds chirping), and even what it tasted like!
- Try to experience this until you feel calmer, at least 5 minutes.

Creating SMART Health Goals

What is one thing you can do to better take care of your heart health?

Create a SMART Plan to achieve your health goals:

- Specific: *What will I do? Where will I do it? How often will I do it?*
- Measurable: *How can I track it? What progress do I want to see?*
- Attainable: *What might get in the way of my plan? What can I do about it?*
- Relevant and Realistic: *Is it a priority for me? If it's not, change my goal.*
- Time-bound: *When will I do it? For how long?*

Next Session: Managing Stress

- Please join us to talk more about the stress we all face, and to learn about how to reduce and manage stress.
- Next steps: phone call to discuss your health goals, referral needs, and any other questions you might have.