

First Coast Cardiovascular Institute

Enjoy the Good Life By Controlling Blood Pressure



One of the simplest ways to help ensure a long and healthy life is keeping tabs on one of your body's key indicators - your blood pressure.

Crucial in preventing a devastating stroke, heart attack, heart failure or kidney disease, your blood pressure should ideally stay below 120/80 or even 115/75, according to new guidelines for preventing heart disease.

Blood pressure is a measure of how hard the blood pushes against the walls of your arteries as it moves through your body. Throughout the day, your blood pressure fluctuates. If it continually stays high, you may have what's called hypertension.

Hypertension currently affects 1 in 4 U.S. adults and has even been linked to increasing the progression of life-altering dementia and cognitive impairment.

When your blood pressure is high, such as greater than 140/90, it damages your blood vessels, heart and kidneys. This can lead to permanent injury and even permanent disability.

Causes of hypertension include obesity, excessive alcohol intake, a family history of high blood pressure, high sodium intake and a lack of exercise.

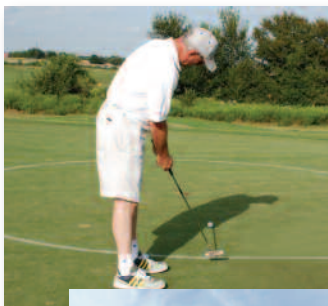
In addition to your routine doctor's visits, you can check your blood pressure at home by purchasing a blood pressure device at local pharmacies or participating in free community blood pressure checks. If your reading is at least 140/90 on separate occasions, contact your doctor for follow-up.

A new category of prehypertension, specifically blood pressure readings of 120-139/80-89, indicates lifestyle changes are needed. These include quitting smoking; eating a low-fat diet that includes more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy; losing extra weight; exercising regularly; and limiting salt and alcohol intake to 2 drinks a day for men and 1 a day for women.

If this alone does not correct the problem, your physician may prescribe blood pressure pills. Since high blood pressure does not have presenting symptoms, thus called "the silent killer," it is crucial to follow your doctor's instructions although you may not directly notice a difference in how you feel.

Being proactive with your health, such as checking and controlling your blood pressure, can make all the difference in enjoying your later years.

For more information or for a free blood pressure check, visit one of First Coast Cardiovascular Institute locations or log onto www.firstcoastcardio.com



"Excellence is not an accident, it is our life long commitment."

"Wherever the art of medicine is loved, there is a love of humanity."

Giving You New Hope

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