

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Risk factors for primary (essential) hypertension Include:

- **Age** – Advancing age is associated with increased blood pressure, particularly systolic blood pressure, and an increased incidence of hypertension.
- **Obesity** – Obesity and weight gain are major risk factors for hypertension and are determinants of the rise in blood pressure that is commonly observed with aging.
- **Family history** – Hypertension is twice as common in subjects who have one or two hypertensive parents, accounting for approximately 30 percent of the variation in blood pressure.
- **Race** – Hypertension tends to be more common, be more severe, occur earlier in life, and be associated with greater target-organ damage in Black patients.
- **High-sodium diet** – Excess dietary sodium intake and accompanying decreased potassium intake increase the risk of hypertension.
- **Excessive alcohol consumption** – Excess alcohol intake is associated with the development of hypertension, and alcohol restriction lowers blood pressure in those with increased intake.
- **Physical inactivity** – Physical inactivity increases the risk for hypertension, and exercise (aerobic, dynamic resistance and isometric resistance) is an effective means of lowering blood pressure.
- **Insufficient sleep** – Short sleep duration (<7 hours per night) is associated with a higher risk of hypertension and increasing the duration of sleep may lower blood pressure
- **History of gestational hypertension or preeclampsia** – Females with a history of high blood pressure during pregnancy are more likely to develop sustained hypertension later in life, even if blood pressure normalizes initially after delivery
- **Social determinants** – Such as low socioeconomic status, lack of health insurance, food and housing insecurity, exposure to discrimination, and lack of access to safe spaces for exercise, may underlie several of the above risk factors for hypertension.

Seeing your doctor regularly is essential to maintaining a healthy blood pressure. Your doctor will review your blood pressure and if your pressure is too high or too low, your doctor will talk to you about what might be causing it and what you can do to get it into the normal range.

To schedule an appointment please call 1-888-296-GPHA (4742)