

Minnesota Department of Health

Hypertension and Family Health History

Screening for Individuals Without a Family History

- ◆ Blood pressure should be measured every two years beginning at age 18.¹

¹American Heart Association, Mayo Clinic, United States Preventive Services Task Force, National Institutes of Health



Screening for Individuals With a Family History

- ◆ Family history is a risk factor for hypertension but there are no specific screening guidelines for individuals with a family history of hypertension.²
- ◆ Talk to your healthcare provider to make a personalized plan to maintain your health

²American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health, Mayo Clinic

What is a Family Health History?



A record of a person's current and past illnesses, and those of his or her parents, brothers, sisters, children, and other blood relatives. A family health history shows the pattern of certain diseases in a family, and helps to determine risk factors for those and other diseases.³

³National Cancer Institute

Hypertension Risk Factors and What You Can Do About Them

Things You Can Change

Obesity: Greater weight leads to greater risk.

Diet: A diet high in fat, calories, and sodium and low in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables increases risk.

Exercise: An inactive lifestyle increases risk.

Caffeine: Increases blood pressure

Salt: Eating too much salt raises some people's blood pressure.⁴

Alcohol: Heavy and regular use of alcohol can increase blood pressure dramatically.⁴

Stress: Increases risk

Smoking: Smoking injures blood vessel walls and speeds up the process of hardening of the arteries.⁵

⁴ <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2142>

⁵ http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/q_smoke/q_smoke.htm

Things You Can't Change

Family history: If your parents or other close blood relatives have high blood pressure, you're more likely to develop it.⁴

Age: Risk increases with age.

Race: African-Americans develop high blood pressure more often than whites, and it tends to occur earlier and be more severe.⁴

Sex: The number of women with hypertension increases with age and is higher than men after age 54.⁶

⁶ Fields LE, Burt VL, Cutler JA, Hughes J, Roccella EJ, Sorlie P. The burden of adult hypertension in the United States 1999-2000. *Hypertension* 2004;44(4):398-404.

What Can You Do If You Have a Family History?

- ◆ Talk to your healthcare provider about your family health history of hypertension
- ◆ Regular risk assessment and counseling about behavioral change by a healthcare provider
- ◆ Regular blood pressure screening
- ◆ Engage in healthy behaviors
- ◆ Take medications to control your blood pressure



What Can You Do?

- ◆ Lose weight if you are overweight
- ◆ Eat a balanced diet including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, and lean meats
- ◆ Get active
- ◆ Drink alcohol sensibly
- ◆ Manage your stress
- ◆ Regular screening
- ◆ Talk to your healthcare provider



Your Family Health History...

Know your past.
Act in the present.
Protect your future.