

Controlling high blood pressure

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Controlling high blood pressure is important in maintaining health and in the prevention of serious health conditions. Most people are unable to tell if they have high blood pressure simply based on the way they feel. What is high blood pressure? What can happen if your blood pressure is high, and what can be done to control it?

High blood pressure is measured by how hard blood pushes against the walls of blood vessels as it flows through the body. It is also called hypertension (too much tension placed on the vessels).

Blood pressure fluctuation is normal, but when blood pressure remains high it causes the heart to work harder and puts pressure on blood vessels. Prolonged high blood pressure can lead to health complications such as heart attack, stroke, heart disease, blindness and kidney failure.

A normal blood pressure reading is 120/80. A sustained blood pressure of 140/90 is considered to be hypertension. A blood pressure should be checked at your physician's office. If your blood pressure is high, your physician may want you to keep a blood pressure log at home for a week or so to see if your pressure is consistently high. If your blood pressure is too high, your physician may want to start you on blood pressure medicine. There are some lifestyle changes you can make that can help with blood pressure control. Regular exercise and weight loss can help and even eliminate the need for blood pressure medicine. Giving up smoking and limiting alcohol use are also important changes you can make. Controlling stress can also aid in managing high blood pressure. There are factors that can contribute to high blood pressure that are out of your control such as heredity, age and ethnicity.

If you are concerned that you may have high blood pressure, take advantage of the Sierra Park Internal Medicine or Sierra Park Family Medicine clinics. An appointment can be made for a blood pressure check and to consult with a health care provider. For more information, please call Sierra Park Internal Medicine at (760) 924-4001.