

Check Your Blood Pressure

By Dr. Scott Higham, Chief of Staff

Hypertension Day takes place each spring and it's an opportune time to talk about hypertension and the importance of getting your blood pressure checked.

The risk of hypertension (high blood pressure) is the increased risk of stroke and damage to important organs, especially the heart and kidneys. Most people with hypertension are not aware that they have it. There are usually no symptoms, and this is why it is important to get your blood pressure checked.

Despite all the points made in the “top ten” to the right, many people will need medication to control their blood pressure and thus reduce their risks. There are many types of medication available to control blood pressure, usually with almost no side effects. Consider purchasing a blood pressure monitor and monitoring your blood } |pressure at home. Keep in mind that you do not want to do this extremely often, and thereby increase your anxiety. Blood pressure varies normally throughout the day and night depending on your level of activity, stress and other factors.

Speak to your family doctor, and get him or her to check your blood pressure and give you further advice. It's all about taking control of your own health.

10 WAYS TO CONTROL HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE WITHOUT MEDICATION

1. Lose extra pounds and watch your waistline
2. Exercise regularly
3. Eat a healthy diet
4. Reduce sodium in your diet
5. Limit the amount of alcohol you drink
6. Quit smoking
7. Cut back on caffeine
8. Reduce your stress
9. Monitor your blood pressure at home and see your doctor regularly
10. Get support