

Baritz Wellness Center, P.C.

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High Blood Pressure (part 1) - Introduction

12/12/10

Overview

Blood pressure (BP) is the pressure exerted by the blood against the walls of the blood vessels, especially the arteries. It is measured with two numbers, for example 120/80. The top number is the pressure exerted when the heart beats (systolic) and the bottom number is the pressure exerted between beats (diastolic). In the US one in three adults has high blood pressure¹, worldwide the number is one in five. In 90 to 95% of cases with high blood pressure there is no identifiable cause (primary or essential hypertension). Secondary hypertension is when the cause can be identified. Causes include kidney disease, constriction of the aorta, endocrine diseases and pregnancy. Primary and secondary hypertension are treated the same, except that in secondary hypertension the cause is treated if possible.

Blood Pressure Category¹

	Systolic		Diastolic
• Normal	90 – 120	and	60 – 80
• Pre-hypertension	121 – 139	or	81 – 89
• HBP Stage 1	140 – 159	or	90 – 99
• HBP Stage 2	> 159	or	> 99
• HBP Crisis, emergency care needed	> 180	or	> 110

According to the *National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute* high blood pressure (HBP) is the most important risk factor for stroke; is a major risk factor for heart attack; is the number one risk factor for congestive heart failure; can cause blood vessels in the eye to burst or bleed leading to impaired vision or blindness; and can narrow the vessels in the kidneys reducing kidney function sometimes causing kidney failure. Even if your blood pressure is normal, you should consider making lifestyle modifications to prevent the development of high blood pressure and improve your heart health. It is advisable to lower pre-hypertension, because the higher the BP, the higher the risk of health problems. At 135/85 one is two times as likely to have a heart attack or stroke as at 115/75.² High Blood Pressure is considered to be a silent disease; but there are some warning signs:

- **Pounding Headaches and/or visual disturbances:** are sometimes reported by persons with high blood pressure
- **Central obesity:** is considered a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.⁴
- **Ear lobe creases:** a risk factor from Traditional Chinese Medicine and confirmed by modern research.⁵
- **Fingernail analysis:** the half-moons at the base of fingernails are normally ¼ of the nail and absent on baby finger. If oversized or present on baby finger they show tendency toward HBP according to Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Treatment Considerations

- Address lifestyle factors such as stress, diet, smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise, etc.
- Use specific herbs that have a long history of use in lowering blood pressure.
- Provide specific nutritional support to the body's blood pressure control systems.
- Provide nutritional support for tissues especially affected by HBP: heart, eyes, kidneys, arteries, etc.
- A medical exam is advised as part of your general blood pressure evaluation and to detect any secondary causes.
- It is not advisable to attempt to treat severe or accelerating hypertension without medical supervision.

To have a custom program created for you or for a free consult call 508 583-2565

1. American Heart Association: www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/AboutHighBloodPressure/Understanding-Blood-Pressure-Readings_UCM_301764_Article.jsp

2. The Blood Pressure Association (UK): www.bpassoc.org.uk/BloodPressureandyou/Thebasics/Whatisnormal

3. National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/hbp/effect/effect.htm

4. Hypertension in obese patients, *Postgraduate Medicine*, 1993, 93 (4): 193-200

5. Predictive value of the ear-crease sign in coronary artery disease, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1863259

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