What is High Blood Pressure?

You may have heard the term high blood pressure, or hypertension, before.

But what does that actually mean? Let's look at the heart and how it works to understand.
When you are healthy your heart pumps blood throughout your body delivering nutrients and vitamins to all of your organs, helping them to stay healthy and do their jobs.

Inside each blood vessel, the heart's pumping action puts pressure on the blood to push it, moving it through your blood vessels.

Blood pressure is the measurement of how hard your blood is pushing against these blood vessel walls.

When you get your blood pressure checked you will see two numbers.

The one on top measures the blood pressure when the heart pumps.

The one on the bottom measures the blood pressure when the heart rests.

For most people, if your blood pressure is higher than 130 over 80 millimeters of mercury, you have high blood pressure.
The higher your blood pressure gets, the more force is pushed against the walls.

This causes damage, and the damage can happen anywhere in the blood stream.

Over time high blood pressure can damage the blood vessels to the point where it can cause a heart attack, heart failure, a stroke, kidney failure, or eye disease.

That's why it's important to check your blood pressure on a regular basis.

Many factors increase your risk for high blood pressure including:

Family history; high blood pressure can be passed down from generation to generation.

Age; your risk increases as you get older.

Gender; before age 45 men have a much greater chance of high blood pressure than women. However after age 64 women actually have a greater chance.

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And being overweight, being inactive, and not eating a heart healthy diet, all increase your risk for high blood pressure.

Even if you aren't at risk for high blood pressure, you can have it...there are no symptoms.

High blood pressure can be doing damage to your body and you don't even know it.

So make sure you have your blood pressure checked. And if you do have high blood pressure, work with your healthcare provider to control it.

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