



NHS Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network Patient Information Leaflet

Diabetes and High Blood pressure

High blood pressure (BP) or hypertension is common in people with diabetes.

In most people with Type 1 diabetes, high blood pressure develops as often as it does in people without diabetes. In some people with Type 1 diabetes, blood pressure may rise if the kidneys have become damaged by poor glucose control.

High blood pressure is much more common in Type 2 diabetes. It affects around half of these people and may even be present before the diabetes has been diagnosed.

In all people with diabetes, if blood pressure is not controlled properly, the chances of having a heart attack, a stroke or problems with eyes or kidney damage are greater.

What are the symptoms of high blood pressure?

There are no symptoms that can warn of high blood pressure. Untreated high blood pressure can do damage without you knowing it. This is why blood pressure must be checked regularly when you attend your GP, Practice Nurse or Diabetes Clinic.

At what level is blood pressure considered to be high?

Your blood pressure should be checked at each visit to the Diabetes Clinic. As some people become anxious when attending the hospital, often the blood pressure will be a little higher at the hospital than with your GP. You may be asked to have your blood pressure checked more often than this if yours has been 'borderline', before you are started on any treatment.

For most patients blood pressure should be:

- A top figure of 130 or less
- A bottom figure of 80 or less

Some people need to aim for a lower figure than this, especially if they have complications of diabetes. For others, especially the over-75's with diabetes,

a higher blood pressure level may be tolerated. Your GP or Hospital Doctor will advise you individually about what levels to aim for.

What should you do if your blood pressure is high?

- Healthy balanced diet
- Reduce stress levels
- Watch your weight
- Reduce your salt intake to a minimum
- Take regular physical activity 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- Reduce your alcohol intake; ask your doctor or nurse for advice
- Stop smoking. Although smoking does not cause high blood pressure, it can make strokes, heart attacks, kidney and eye damage more likely.
- You may be prescribed blood pressure tablets. Make sure that you take these regularly. If they cause side effects, let your doctor know so that an alternative tablet can be used.

What else should you know?

- Keeping your blood pressure below 130/80 cuts down the chances of death from long-term complications of diabetes by a third
- Good blood pressure control can significantly reduce your risk of serious eye damage
- Good blood pressure control protects your kidney function.

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