

ISHIB Health Facts

HYPERTENSION

WHAT IS HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE)

High blood pressure (or hypertension) is a chronic increase of blood pressure to levels above normal; blood pressure is the force exerted by blood against artery walls. A person has hypertension when his or her blood pressure is at or above 140/90 mm Hg (millimeters of mercury).

Expressed in two numbers: the top, or systolic, gives the measurement of the blood's force against blood vessel walls as the heart beats; the bottom, or diastolic, is the measurement of the blood's force against blood vessel walls when the heart is at rest between beats.

TWO KINDS OF HYPERTENSION

- **Essential** (also known as **primary**) hypertension is high blood pressure for which a specific cause is unknown. The majority (90-95%) of hypertension cases falls into this category.
- **Secondary** hypertension is high blood pressure that is a symptom of an identified medical problem, such as kidney disease. If the medical problem is fixed, the high blood pressure will decrease.
- In the United States, 45 percent of heart attacks occur among individuals who are less than 65 years old — it is not just a disease of the elderly:
 - CVD is the second leading cause of death for those 45 to 64 years old.
 - CVD is the third leading cause of death for those 25 to 44 years old. (*Egan BM, Lackland, DT. Ethn Dis. 1998;8:228-239*)

PREVALENCE OF HYPERTENSION

- Hypertension is very common and affects as many as 50 million Americans.
- Although 54 percent of all hypertensives are being treated with antihypertensive medications, only 27 percent have their blood pressure under control. That means that more than 36 million Americans do not have their blood pressure under control.
- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death, claiming nearly 1,000,000 lives annually and accounting for more than 40 percent of the deaths in the United States.

HYPERTENSION AND ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS

HYPERTENSION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

- Hypertension is more common among African Americans. In the US, nearly one in three African Americans has hypertension compared to one in four Whites. African Americans develop high blood pressure earlier in life and at every age have more severe high blood pressure than Whites.
- The estimated prevalence of high blood pressure for non-Hispanic Blacks age 20 and older is



35.0% for men and 34.2% for women. For Whites, estimated prevalence of high blood pressure for men is 24.4% and 22.0% for women.*

- As many as 30% of all deaths in hypertensive Black men and 20% of all deaths in hypertensive Black women may be attributable to high blood pressure.*
- In 1995 the death rate from high blood pressure was 29.6 for Black males (355% higher than for White males) and 21.7 for Black females (352% higher than for White females.)*
- About 71% of non-Hispanic Blacks ages 60 years and older have high blood pressure.*
- Blacks develop high blood pressure at an earlier age and, at any decade of life, hypertension is more severe in Blacks than in Whites. This results in a 1.3-fold greater rate of nonfatal stroke, a 1.8-fold greater rate of fatal stroke, a 1.5-fold greater rate of heart disease deaths and 5-fold greater rate of end-stage renal disease.*

HYPERTENSION AND HISPANIC POPULATIONS

- The leading causes of death for Hispanic males and females are diseases of heart and stroke. For Hispanic men, 27.9% of the deaths are attributed to diseases of heart and stroke, while 34.9% of female deaths are caused by diseases of heart and stroke.*
- Among Hispanics aged 20-74, the prevalence of high blood pressure is 24.2% for men and 22.4% for women.*
- For Puerto Ricans, the estimated high blood pressure prevalence is 15.6% of men and 11.5%

for women.*

- Among Cuban Americans, the estimated high blood pressure prevalence is 22.8% of men and 15.5% for women.*
- A common cause of heart disease is the blockage of the coronary arteries due to the accumulation of cholesterol. Among Hispanic women, between 43% and 52% have blood cholesterol above the desirable level (240mg/dl).*
- Diabetes can play a role in high blood pressure. Reports from the Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (HHANES) estimate that 1.3 million Hispanic adults (10%) have diabetes.

**From the American Heart Association*

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