

## **What is Hypertension (high blood pressure)?**

It is one of today's most common diseases in addition to the heart and kidney disease. Most commonly, it affects old aged people. It is a chronic disorder that requires the patient to adapt and to live with it. Consequently, it is necessary for the patient to follow the medical instructions carefully.

### **What is Hypertension?**

The heart works as a pumping machine that pumps blood to the body through blood vessels. The force exerted by blood within the arteries is called the blood pressure.

The value of blood pressure depends on several factors:

1. The volume of circulating blood.
2. The ability of the arteries to stretch.
3. Contractility of the heart muscle (force of heart contraction) to pump.

When measuring the blood pressure we should have two readings, for example:120/80

\*The first reading (120)is the measurement of the heart muscle contractility “contracts”

\*The second reading (80) is the measurement when the heart muscle relaxes.

**Blood pressure is considered high when it reaches over 140/90**

### **Reasons of Hypertension**

Around 80% of the direct reasons for hypertension are not known exactly. However, there are several factors that precipitate to high blood pressure:

- 1- Heredity.
- 2- Emotional disturbances.
- 3- Obesity.
- 4- Vascular diseases (High blood cholesterol levels (cholesterol accumulate on the vessels walls that decrease its elasticity and causes what is called arteriosclerosis).
- 5- High sodium and fat intake; foods that elevate blood pressure like (salt, coffee, tea, fatty foods, soda drinks and heavy alcohol intake).
- 6- Cigarette smoking also decrease the blood vessels elasticity.
- 7- Low physical exercises or immobility.
- 8- Oral contraceptive use.
- 9- Disorder in some of the endocrine glands such as the thyroid gland.

### **Symptoms of Hypertension**

High blood pressure (hypertension) is also called “the silent killer” because it does not have symptoms but may appear by coincidence. However, there may be some symptoms such as:

1. Frequent headache mainly in the lower back of the head.
2. Fainting and dizziness.
3. Palpitation (feeling your own heart pump) and tachycardia (high pulse rate).

4. Unclear vision.
5. Tinnitus.

The presence or absence of these symptoms does not assure that the person has hypertension because these symptoms can appear with other diseases, hence it is important to measure your heart rate more frequently and at different intervals.

### **Treatment and Prevention**

1- Take your medication on time and regularly.

2- Follow a good and healthy food regimen which consists of:

1. Avoid drinking coffee, tea, soda drinks and alcohol drinks.
2. Salt restriction of foods especially white cheese, olives, nuts and canned food, salty fish, and avoid adding salt to your meals.
3. Weight reduction and decrease eating carbohydrates and fatty food; especially food rich in cholesterol like butter, egg, and red meat.

3- Follow a regular program of exercise by:

1. Exercising moderately such as walking for 30 minutes daily.
2. Relaxing and resting from time to time and avoid emotional stress if possible.

4- Avoid smoking.

5- Avoid emotional stress.

6- Check your blood pressure regularly