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**THE HEDON GROUP PRACTICE**

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THE HEDON GROUP PRACTICE

*A BRIEF GUIDE TO  
HIGH BLOOD  
PRESSURE  
(Hypertension)*



*This leaflet has been produced  
for the patients of The Hedon  
Group Practice*

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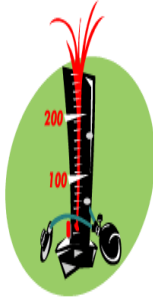
## What is High Blood Pressure?

High blood pressure (hypertension) means that the pressure of the blood in your arteries is too high. Blood pressure is recorded as two numbers, for example 150/90. This is said as “150 over 95”.

### What do the numbers mean?

The top (first) number is the systolic pressure. This is the pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts.

The bottom (second) number is the diastolic pressure. This is the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between each heartbeat.



### Why is high blood pressure important?

Having high blood pressure increases the risk of developing heart disease, a stroke, and other serious conditions. As a rule, the higher the pressure, the greater the risk.

### What causes high blood pressure?

In most cases the cause is not known. This is known as ‘essential hypertension’. It is thought that slight narrowing of the arteries increases the resistance to blood flow, which increases the blood pressure.

### Do I need any tests?

If you are diagnosed as having high blood pressure you are likely to have some routine tests which include:

- A urine test to check if you have protein or blood in your urine.
- A blood test to check that your kidneys are working fine, and to check your cholesterol level and sugar (glucose) level.
- A heart tracing (an ECG)

### How is high blood pressure treated?

There are two ways in which blood pressure can be lowered:

#### Modification to lifestyle:

- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Exercise regularly
- Have a low salt intake
- Eat a healthy diet
- Drink alcohol in moderation

#### Medication:

- There are several medicines that can lower blood pressure. One or two medicines may be tried before one is found to suit. Some people may need to take more than one type of blood pressure lowering medication.
- In most cases medication is needed for life.



### How often do I need a check up?

- You will need more frequent blood pressure check ups initially, until your blood pressure is lowered to your target level.
- Your Doctor will advise you what your target blood pressure is. This can be different to other people depending on whether you have other conditions such as Diabetes.
- Once your blood pressure is well controlled you will need less frequent check ups, perhaps twice a year. These can be done by a Nurse or Healthcare Assistant at the Surgery.
- You will also need an annual blood test to check your kidneys, cholesterol and sugar (glucose) level.



### What about smoking and cholesterol?

Smoking and a high cholesterol level do not directly affect the level of your blood pressure. However, they greatly add to your health risk if you also have high blood pressure. If you smoke, you should make every effort to stop. If your cholesterol level is high, it can be treated.

