

# South Central's Health on Blast

*Hypertension (High Blood Pressure): risk factor for heart disease*

- Blood pressure is the force exerted on the inner walls of blood vessels as the heart pumps blood to all parts of the body.
- The top number is the systolic pressure, measures the force as the heart contracts and pushes blood out the heart.
- The bottom number is the diastolic pressure, measures the force as the heart relaxes between contractions.
- Adult blood pressure is considered normal **below** 120/80.
- Hypertension is defined as a blood pressure of greater than 140/90 for adults under 60 and greater than 150/90 for adults over 60.
- The prevalence of high blood pressure in African Americans in the United States is the **highest in the world**.

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## Symptoms of Hypertension

1. Hypertension is known as the **SILENT KILLER** because often there are **no** symptoms.
2. Some people experience headaches, facial flushing, dizziness, nose bleeds or blurred vision with high blood pressure. (Usually when these symptoms happen, Blood Pressures are above 180/110 or hypertensive crisis)

## Risk Factors

- \*Age
- \*Smoking
- \*Lack of physical activity
- \*Poor Diet, especially high salt
- \*Overweight/Obesity
- \*Stress

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## Tips to Managing Hypertension

1. **Know your Numbers** (take your BP at home and write it down in a notebook, take notebook to your doctor's appointments)
2. **Healthy Diet** (reduce sodium to 1500 mg/day =  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon per day) – **DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)** is recommended
3. **30 minutes of exercise on most days** (walking, bicycling, gardening, or other aerobic exercise) & muscle strengthening activities at least twice a week
4. **Stress Management** (meditation, yoga, or breathing exercises, etc)
5. **Smoking Cessation**
6. **Avoid NSAIDs & decongestants** (Motrin, Tylenol, Sudafed, etc) as they may increase BP, unless MD recommended