

# High Blood Pressure

## High Blood Pressure Symptoms

High blood pressure usually causes no symptoms. Even if high blood pressure does cause symptoms, the symptoms are usually mild and nonspecific (vague, or suggesting many different disorders). Thus, high blood pressure often is labeled "the silent killer." People who have high blood pressure typically don't know it until their blood pressure is measured. Sometimes people with high blood pressure have the following symptoms:

[Headache](#)

[Dizziness](#)

[Blurred vision](#)

[Nausea](#)

People often do not seek medical care until they have symptoms arising from the [organ](#) damage caused by chronic (ongoing, long-term) high blood pressure. The following types of organ damage are commonly seen in chronic high blood pressure:

Heart attack

[Heart failure](#)

Stroke or "mini stroke" ([transient ischemic attack](#), TIA)

Kidney failure

Eye damage with loss of vision

Peripheral arterial disease

Outpouchings of the aorta, called aneurysms

About 1% of people with high blood pressure do not seek medical care until the high blood pressure is very severe, a condition known as [malignant](#) hypertension.

In malignant hypertension, the diastolic blood pressure (the lower number) often exceeds 140 mm Hg.

Malignant hypertension may be associated with headache, light-headedness, or nausea. This degree of high blood pressure requires emergency hospitalization and lowering of blood pressure to prevent brain hemorrhage or stroke. It is of utmost importance to realize that high blood pressure can be unrecognized for years, causing no symptoms but causing progressive damage to the heart, other organs, and blood vessels.

## High Blood Pressure Treatment

You and your health care provider at Healing Hands can discuss options for treating your high blood pressure. Many people can lower their blood pressure significantly with lifestyle changes, such as weight loss and exercise, but most still need medication to keep their blood pressure in the healthy range. Whichever therapy you choose, it is important to have your blood pressure checked regularly to make sure that your treatment is working. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a leading cause of heart disease, heart attacks, heart failure, kidney failure, vision problems, and stroke.

You may have wondered whether the blood pressure machines at the [pharmacy](#) or supermarket are accurate.

A recent study showed that they can be accurate, but sometimes are not. It usually is not possible to tell whether a particular machine is working properly. The cuff should inflate and fit snugly around your arm. Use the machine as directed. Measure your blood pressure three times, two minutes apart. The third measurement is usually the most accurate. If your blood pressure is high on the third reading, even borderline, have it checked by another machine that you know is accurate (for example, at the office of your health care provider). Do not rely on the machines in stores alone to check your blood pressure. Have it checked regularly by a trained medical professional with a machine that is known to be accurate.