

# WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

## Primary risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but often without early symptoms

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Frio-Nueces Current

It is a disease that is on the rise in South Texas' population. Most of the time, hypertension goes unnoticed for too long because it doesn't show any immediate signs.

However, hypertension – commonly known as high blood pressure – is an underlying condition to diabetes and obesity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than half a million deaths in the United

States included hypertension as a primary or contributing cause. Research indicates nearly half of the adults in the US, 116 million, have hypertension.

Blood pressure is the force that a person's blood exerts against the walls of the blood vessels. The pressure depends on the resistance of the blood vessels and how hard the heart has to work.

Hypertension is a primary risk factor for cardiovascular disease; therefore managing blood pressure is vital for preserving health and reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke or even death.

Often hypertension has no symptoms that are immediately apparent, but ultimately it produces

severe headaches, nosebleeds, fatigue or confusion, vision problems, chest pain, difficulty breathing, chest pain, irregular heartbeat or blood in the urine.

Physicians across South Texas report a rise in high blood pressure patients over the past two years. Some attribute the increase to the coronavirus and people's inadequate eating habits with diets high in salt, fat and cholesterol.

Stress can also contribute to high blood pressure, medical professionals say, although it is often temporary. However, stressful situations often lead individuals to drink alcohol, smoke or eat unhealthy foods to cope, and those activities are linked to heart attacks, strokes and hypertension.

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to order something smaller and more nutritional.

It's always easier when you have someone on your team.

#### WHILE YOU'RE EATING

Make conversation. You can't eat when you're talking. Well, most of you can't.

Take smaller bites while you are eating, and thoroughly chew your food. It takes time for a message of fullness to travel from your stomach to your brain, and this gives the body a chance to catch up.

If the portions are unavoidably large, offer to share your order with a nearby colleague. If no one will take you up on the offer, commit to taking some of it home to eat another time.

#### AFTER YOU EAT

If it's possible, tell everyone that you are walking back to the office, rather than riding. Post-meal exercise helps work

off some of your just-ingested lunch, while also increasing general wellness.

When you're back at work, skip the elevator for the stairs. This kind of cardio exercise can help burn even more calories, instead of converting them to fat. Avoid desserts or snacking, as these are two everyday hazards in any workplace.

In all events, revert to drinking water. It helps with food digestion and can suppress your appetite.

Controlling your food intake, being aware of how much your body needs versus how much you've actually eaten, preparing to say 'No' to something that looks far more tempting than good for you, and discovering healthy foods that you'll enjoy in any setting, are the first steps to controlling your overall wellbeing in diet.



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