

## What is it?

Hypertension is the medical name for high blood pressure. High blood pressure means your blood is pumping with more force than normal through your arteries.

After a while, this increased pressure can start to damage blood vessels in the brain, heart and kidneys. This could lead to stroke, heart failure or kidney failure. If you lower your blood pressure, you can lower your risk.

## What will my GP do now?

When your GP tells you you have hypertension, they will want to know more about your health and habits. To do this, your GP may:

- Measure your weight and ask about your diet
- Ask you about your lifestyle and suggest changes
- Prescribe medication to help lower your blood pressure
- Order blood and urine tests to check for other issues such as high cholesterol or kidney problems
- Refer you to a specialist if you need to see one

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Should I check my blood pressure at home?*
- Do I need to take medication?*
- What foods should I avoid?*



## What will my GP do in the future?

People with high-blood pressure often need to be monitored and treated for the rest of their lives. Your GP may want to see you regularly for check-ups. At your check-up visits your GP may:

- Check your blood pressure
- Adjust medication if needed
- Check how your lifestyle changes are going
- Perform a yearly kidney health check
- Refer you to a specialist if your blood pressure is not controlled or there are other complications

## What can I do?

See your GP regularly for check-ups. It is also important to stay active when you have high blood pressure. Your GP may recommend certain types of regular activity to suit your lifestyle. You should also:

- Always follow any dietary changes recommended by your GP - Ask your GP about the DASH diet
- Take your medication as prescribed
- Take and record your blood pressure at home, if your GP has advised you to do so
- Quit smoking if you still smoke - Phone Quitline on **13 78 48** to help

## What supports are available?

For patients needing a specialist referral, Bankstown and Liverpool Hospital nephrology clinics provide support for hypertension. Alternatively, your GP can refer you to a private specialist but there may be costs involved.

## Where can I learn more?

- **Healthdirect Australia** - How to lower your blood pressure: [healthdirect.gov.au](https://healthdirect.gov.au)
- **RACGP** - DASH eating plan: [racgp.org.au](https://racgp.org.au)
- **Heart Foundation Australia** - Blood pressure and your heart: [heartfoundation.org.au](https://heartfoundation.org.au)