

# Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management

Information for the public

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## High blood pressure (hypertension): the care you should expect

High blood pressure (also called hypertension) is very common, affecting about 1 in 3 adults in the UK. The chance of developing high blood pressure rises as a person gets older. It often has no symptoms so many people don't know they have it, but the higher a person's blood pressure the greater their risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other health problems. Doctors can help people keep their blood pressure to a safe level using a combination of lifestyle changes and medicines – what works best is different for each person. Talking to your healthcare professional can help you decide about treatment. NICE has developed a [patient decision aid](#) to help with this.

We want this guideline to make a difference to people with high blood pressure by making sure that healthcare professionals:

- know how to diagnose high blood pressure and when to refer someone to a specialist in hypertension
- fully explain the different ways to lower your blood pressure, including the pros and cons of starting on medicines
- explain how important lifestyle changes are to control your blood pressure
- offer you regular check-ups to monitor your blood pressure.

## Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about:

- What matters most to you – what do you want to get out of any treatment for high blood pressure?
- What are you most worried about – are there risks or do you have concerns about treatments for high blood pressure that worry you more than others?
- What happens if you choose not to take medicines for your blood pressure?

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Helping you decide about treatment

You can choose whether to take medicines to lower your blood pressure, and if you do choose to take medicines, which type is best for you. We've produced this [patient decision aid](#) to help you and your healthcare professional discuss your options and decide what's right for you.

## Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about high blood pressure.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Blood Pressure UK](#), 020 7882 6218
- [British Heart Foundation](#), Helpline 0300 330 3311
- [Stroke Association](#), 0303 3033 100
- [Diabetes UK](#), 0345 123 2399

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by hypertension and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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