

Hypertension / High BP

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition characterised by elevated blood pressure levels in the arteries. Blood pressure is the force exerted by the blood against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps it around the body. It is measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg) and is typically expressed as two values: systolic pressure over diastolic pressure.

Normal blood pressure is generally considered to be around 120/80 mmHg. Hypertension is diagnosed when blood pressure consistently exceeds 130/80 mmHg. However, the specific thresholds for diagnosis may vary depending on factors such as age, overall health, and presence of other medical conditions.

There are two main types of hypertension:

1. **Primary or essential hypertension:** This is the most common type, accounting for about 90-95% of cases. Primary hypertension develops gradually over time and has no identifiable cause. It is often associated with factors such as age, family history, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy diet (high in sodium and low in potassium), excessive alcohol consumption, and stress.
2. **Secondary hypertension:** This type of hypertension is caused by an underlying medical condition or certain medications. It accounts for about 5-10% of cases. Secondary hypertension can be a result of kidney disease, hormonal disorders, certain medications (such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or oral contraceptives), sleep apnea, thyroid problems, and others.

Hypertension is considered a silent condition because it often does not cause noticeable symptoms in its early stages. However, over time, it can lead to serious health complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney problems, and damage to other organs.

Managing hypertension typically involves a combination of lifestyle modifications and, if necessary, medication. Lifestyle changes may include adopting a healthy diet (such as the DASH diet, which emphasises fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products while limiting sodium intake), regular physical exercise, weight management, limiting alcohol consumption, quitting smoking, and managing stress.

In cases where lifestyle modifications are not sufficient, doctors may prescribe antihypertensive medications to help control blood pressure. These medications work in different ways to relax blood vessels, decrease fluid volume, or reduce the heart's workload.

If you suspect you have hypertension or have concerns about your blood pressure, it is essential to consult your doctor at SunStar Clinics for an accurate diagnosis and appropriate management. Regular blood pressure checks are crucial for early detection and effective control of hypertension.