

# Health Bulletin



## High Blood Pressure

(NAPSA)—Every day millions of patients and their doctors struggle with treating high blood pressure effectively. Blood pressure is the force of blood against the artery walls. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, occurs when the force is above normal range, causing the heart to work harder to get vital oxygen to the body's cells.

High blood pressure affects about one in four American adults and raises the risk of heart attack, stroke, congestive heart failure and kidney failure. For people who are overweight, smoke, or who have high blood cholesterol levels or diabetes, their risk of heart attack or stroke is even greater.

Statistics show that 60 percent of patients require multiple medications to reach their blood pressure treatment goals. "One of the challenges in treating patients with hypertension is the use of multiple medications. There are a number of treatment options available to help us manage high blood pressure effectively along with diet and exercise," said Dr. Mark Houston, Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. "The need for multiple medications reminds us that aggressive treatment is key in reducing high blood pressure in many patients."



**Talk to your doctor about ways to manage your blood pressure.**

There are no symptoms of high blood pressure and many people have it for years without knowing it. For this reason, high blood pressure is often called the "silent killer." The only way to tell if you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked.

If you already take medication to lower your blood pressure, talk to your doctor about what else you can do to lower your risk for heart disease and stroke. Do not stop taking medication without first talking to your doctor.

To learn more about high blood pressure and ways it can be treated, talk to your doctor or log on to [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).