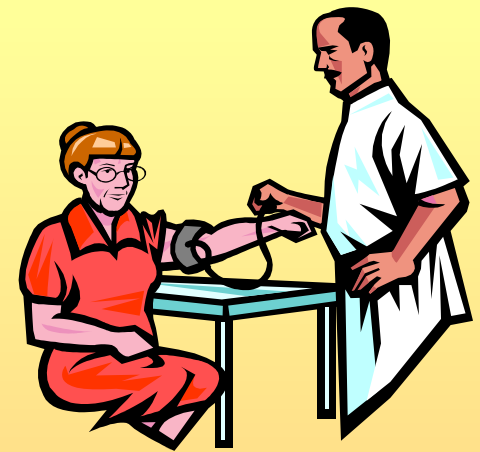


Hypertension

by Tina Bobek, R.N.



- **Blood pressure test**

- **What is it?**

- An inflatable cuff, wrapped around your upper arm, measures the amount of pressure your heart generates when pumping blood out through your arteries (systolic pressure) and measures the amount of pressure in your arteries when your heart is at rest between beats (diastolic pressure).

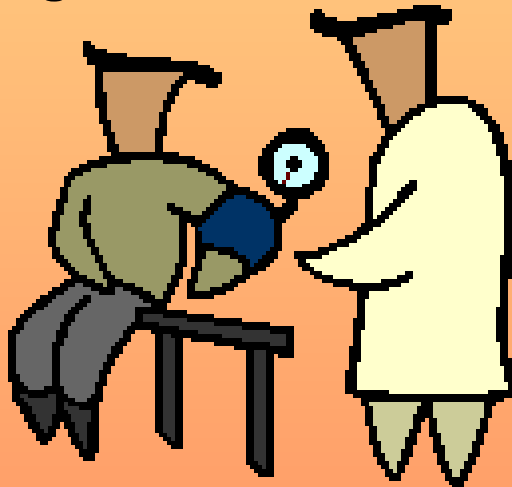
- **Why?**

- Early detection of high blood pressure (hypertension). Blood pressure is determined by the amount of blood your heart pumps and the resistance to blood flow in your arteries. In general, the narrower and stiffer your arteries, the harder your heart must work to pump the same amount of blood.

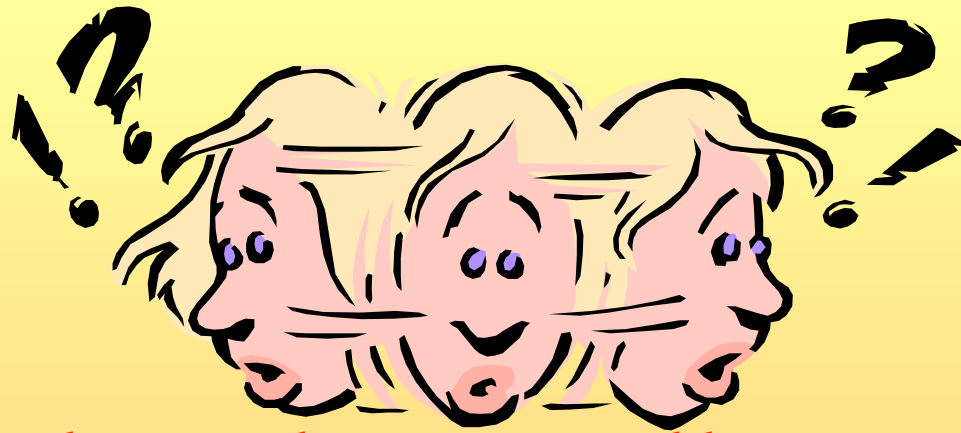
The longer high blood pressure goes undetected and untreated, the higher your risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney damage.

Classification of blood pressure measurements

- **Systolic (Top number)**
 - Optimal Lower than 120
 - Normal Lower than 130
 - High-normal 130-139
 - High (hypertension) 140 or higher
- **Diastolic (Bottom number)**
 - Optimal Lower than 80
 - Normal Lower than 85
 - High-normal 85-89
 - High (hypertension) 90 or higher



- Source: National Institutes of Health, 1997. Numbers are expressed in millimeters of mercury (mm Hg).



What does it all mean?

- ****High-normal blood pressure may increase your risk of cardiovascular disease.**
- *****Hypertension diagnosis is based on the average of two or more readings (high systolic or diastolic readings — or both) taken at each of two or more visits after an initial screening. Systolic hypertension is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, even without elevated diastolic pressure, especially in older adults.**