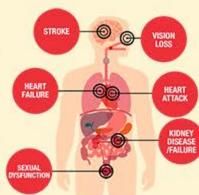## What You need to Know:
Managing High Blood Pressure

Nearly 1 in 3 American adults has high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, your heart has to work harder and your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other problems goes up. High blood pressure won't go away without treatment. That could include lifestyle changes and, if your doctor prescribes it, medicine.

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood flow inside your blood vessels. Your doctor records your blood pressure as two numbers, such as 120/80, which you may hear them say as "120 over 80." Both numbers are important.

The first number is the pressure as your heart beats and pushes blood through the blood vessels. Health care providers call this the "systolic" pressure. The second number is the pressure pressure when the vessels relax between heartbeats. It's called the "diastolic" pressure.

The lower your blood pressure, the better your chances of delaying or preventing a heart attack or stroke. Write down your most recent results and your goal. If you're unsure of your results or how to set a goal, talk with your doctor.

Lowering Blood Pressure with Lifestyle Changes

You can help control your blood pressure with lifestyle changes. These include changing your diet to include more fruits and vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, some nuts, beans, and lean meats. You can also cut the amount of salt in your diet through smart shopping and cooking. Finally, you can make important changes in your daily activity, such as doing 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, like walking, most days; limiting the amount of alcohol you drink, and, if you smoke, quitting.

Lowering Blood Pressure with Medications

Several types of medicines work to treat high blood pressure. Not everyone takes the same blood pressure medicine, and many people take more than one kind. Which ones you take, if any, will depend on your blood pressure and other things like cost and side effects.