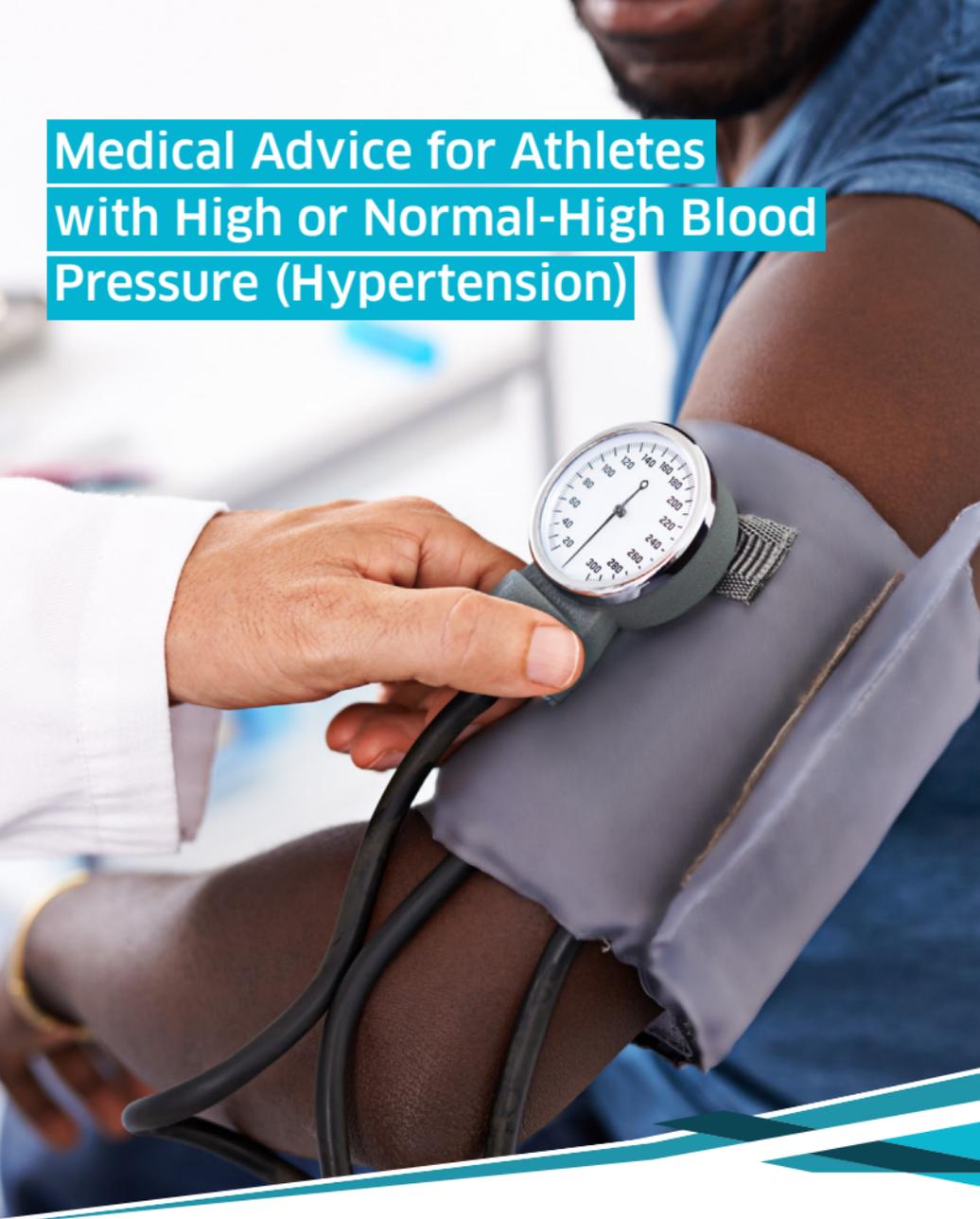


Medical Advice for Athletes with High or Normal-High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)





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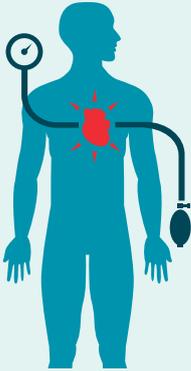
WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?



Blood pressure (BP) is the pressure of your blood in your arteries as your heart pumps it around your body.



- Your BP naturally goes up and down all the time, adapting to your heart's needs depending on what you are doing- for example, during exercise your BP goes up, while it goes down after exercising and at rest.
- Hypertension (HTN) is when your blood pressure is higher than normal.
- HTN increases the chance that the arteries in your body will get blocked, causing Cardiovascular Disease (CVD), which could lead to heart attack, brain clot (stroke), or kidney problems, and affect your performance as an athlete.



KNOW THE FACTS!

- HTN is the most common risk factor for CVD in athletes.

According to the World Health Organisation

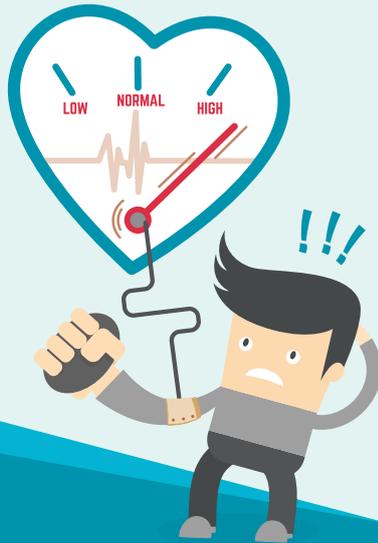
17.5

million people die each year from CVD

That's one out of every 3 deaths worldwide!

SYMPTOMS OF HIGH BP

- You can't feel high blood pressure. There are usually no warning signs- so you might have it and not know.
- That's why it's important to get it checked regularly!!



CAUSES OF HYPERTENSION



Healthy Lifestyle Tips to Reduce your BP



1. Change your diet!

- ✗ Reduce your salt intake! Avoid processed food, fast food, snacks, chips, and feta cheese.
- ✗ Reduce sweets and sugary drinks to prevent obesity!
- ✗ Eat less butter and red meat (as they contain too much unhealthy fat and cholesterol).



- ✓ Read food labels and choose items that are low in sodium (labeled with less than 140mg of sodium per serving*).
- ✓ Eat more vegetables and add a serving* of fresh fruit to your meals or as a snack.
- ✓ Eat 2-3 servings* of low-fat dairy foods daily (look for serving sizes on the packaging of the foods you buy).
- ✓ Eat more fish and poultry.
- ✓ Use more olive oil instead of butter.
- ✓ Eat one serving* of nuts or lentils daily! Nuts (especially walnuts and almonds) and legumes (lentils, kidney beans and others) are wonderful sources of fibre and protein, and help to prevent cardiovascular disease.
- ✓ Always choose whole-wheat (not white) bread, pasta, cereals, and brown rice.



2. Review your training routines!

Try to be aerobically active for at least 30 minutes per day.

Try to do strength training two or three times per week.



3. Control your weight!

Reduce your weight with a healthy diet and exercise regime if you are obese.

4. Don't smoke, or drink energy drinks and alcohol!

Please be aware that Shisha smoking is at least as dangerous for your health as cigarette smoking!



* <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/how-much-do-we-need-each-day/serve-sizes>

NORMAL / ABNORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure measurements always have two 'numbers' or components: e.g. 120/80 mmHg.

e.g.
120

The first number (e.g. 120) is the 'systolic' blood pressure, which represents the blood pressure when the heart is beating while pumping blood.

e.g.
80

The second number (e.g. 80) is the 'diastolic' blood pressure, representing the blood pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.

The systolic BP is always higher than the diastolic BP.



Normal BP for adults is defined as a:

Systolic BP below 120 mmHg and Diastolic BP below 80 mmHg.

Hypertension in adults is defined as a:

Systolic BP equal or above 140 mmHg and/or Diastolic BP equal or above 90 mmHg.

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR BP AT HOME

- Avoid drinking coffee or smoking cigarettes 30 minutes before your BP is measured.
- Don't exercise before your BP is measured.
- Empty your bladder beforehand to avoid a false positive high BP associated with a full bladder.
- Relax and do not talk during the measurement. You should be seated comfortably with arms and legs uncrossed and have been resting for at least 5 minutes with your arm supported at the level of your heart on a firm surface.
- Upper arm electronic devices are best (find a list of validated devices at: <http://www.bhsoc.org/index.php?cID=246>), although wrist devices can be useful if you are an athlete with large arms.
- Choose the correct sized cuff!! It should cover almost 80% of your upper arm (between the top of the shoulder and the elbow), encircling the arm completely. The standard cuff (12-13 wide and 35cm long) may not be suitable for you if you have thin or large arms.
- Use the arm with the higher reading.
- It is important to take two readings, 1-2 minutes apart and use the average of both measurements (to calculate the average add both systolic figures and divide them by two, and both diastolic figures and divide them by two).



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