

# HYPERTENSION PREVENTION INFORMATION

## Hypertension Management

Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

The Black population is one of the populations greatly affected by Hypertension or High Blood Pressure. Blacks are 2 to 3 times at greater risk of developing Hypertension and are also likely to be diagnosed at much earlier age than other communities. African American men suffer disproportionately from high blood pressure, a known risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

## What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is a measure of the pressure or force of blood against the walls of your blood vessels (known as arteries). Your blood pressure reading is based on two measures called **systolic** and **diastolic**. The **systolic** (top) number is the measure of the pressure force when your heart contracts and pushes out the blood. The **diastolic** (bottom) number is the measure of when your heart relaxes between beats.

The table below defines varying blood pressure categories: low risk, medium risk, high risk. See your doctor or healthcare provider to get a proper blood pressure measurement.

## BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORIES

Category	Systolic / Diastolic
Low risk	120 / 80
Medium risk	121-139 / 80-89
High risk	140+ / 90

There are some exceptions to these categories.

For people living with diabetes, the high risk category for your blood pressure is slightly lower and should be less than 130 / 80. Consult a healthcare provider if your blood pressure level is higher than 130 / 80 on more than one occasion.

## Low Blood Pressure

Low blood pressure is when the pressure in your arteries drops and your heart is pumping your blood at a slower rate than normal through your blood vessels. Blood pressure levels below 120 / 80 may be considered normal unless you feel light-headed or dizzy. Your healthcare provider can help you determine if you have low blood pressure.



## How does high blood pressure cause heart disease and stroke?

Over time, high blood pressure can damage blood vessel walls, causing scarring that promotes the build-up of fatty plaque. This build-up can narrow and eventually block arteries. It also strains the heart and eventually weakens it. Very high blood pressure can cause blood vessels in the brain to burst resulting in a stroke.

## How to manage your hypertension

You can make changes to your lifestyle that will help you control your blood pressure. Your doctor might **prescribe medications** that can help you. By controlling your blood pressure, you will lower your risk for the harmful effects of high blood pressure.

**TAIBU has implemented a Hypertension Management Program** – an inter-professional team of Physicians/Nurse Practitioners, Dietitian and Nurse – will support you in identifying realistic goals and objectives in your journey of implementing lifestyle changes and managing your High Blood Pressure.

The program includes among other things:

- Prescriptions and follow up
- Education and Awareness
- Nutrition Counselling & Education
- Physical Activity/Exercise Sessions
- Smoking Cessation Program and Support
- Social Work support [dealing with Social Determinants of Health including Income, unemployment] and Stress Management

**If you require additional information or if you want to access the Hypertension Management Program at TAIBU please call 416 644 3536.**

