

Cardiac Risk Factors

Non-modifiable Risk Factors

1. Family History – If a father or brother has suffered a heart attack before the age of 55, or a sister or mother has suffered one before the age of 65, you are at greater risk of developing heart disease. Studies have shown a genetic component for hypertension, abnormal blood lipids, and Type 2 diabetes as factors related to the development of cardiovascular disease.
2. Sex – Men are generally at greater risk of coronary artery disease. However, the risk for women is similar to men after menopause.
3. Ethnicity – People with African or Asian ancestry are at higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease than other racial groups.
4. Socioeconomic Status – Lower economic and social position based on income, education achieved, and occupation environment increases the risk of heart disease.

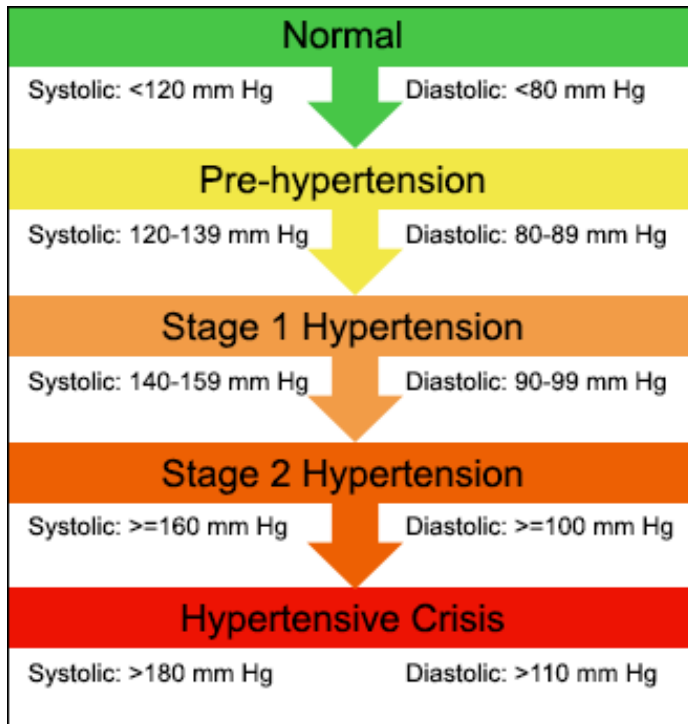
Modifiable Risk Factors: Physical Inactivity

If you are physically active you will increase your life span, regardless of any adverse inherited factors. Physical activity, at any age, protects you. Being active is beneficial for lowering your blood pressure, blood lipid levels, blood glucose levels, blood clotting factors, and inflammation which all affect the health of your blood vessels and heart. Even small increases in physical fitness are associated with a significant reduction in cardiovascular risk, even if you have existing disease. Your feeling of well-being and quality of life may also improve.

Modifiable Risk Factors: Elevated Cholesterol Level

Cholesterol is a type of fat (lipid) that's carried in the blood. Your body needs some cholesterol to stay healthy. A high cholesterol level in the blood contributes to plaque buildup in blood vessels. Over time, this plaque narrows and hardens the blood vessels. This reduces or blocks blood flow in the blood vessels and raises your risk for heart attack, stroke, and other health problems.

Modifiable Risk Factors: Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)



High blood pressure is known as the “silent killer”. This is because most of the time it does not cause symptoms. In fact, most people do not know they have high blood pressure until other problems develop. It is a disease that often requires lifelong treatment. The good news is that it can be managed with lifestyle intervention and medications.

Modifiable Risk Factors: Overweight/Obesity

Being overweight may cause you to develop hypertension, abnormal blood cholesterol levels, diabetes, sleep apnea, and atherosclerosis. These conditions will put you at high risk of cardiovascular disease. Excess fat tissue especially around the waist, even in the absence of other heart disease risks has a direct effect on heart structure and function leading to a higher risk of developing heart failure.

You can tell if you are overweight/obese by the relationship between your height and current weight. This measure is known as the **Body Mass Index (BMI)**. Talk to your care manager to learn your BMI.

Underweight: Below 18.5

Normal: 18.5-24.9

Overweight: 25.0 – 29.9

Obesity: 30.0 – and Above