



High Blood Pressure:

What you need to know

Blood pressure is the force (measured in millimeters of mercury) of the blood against the inside walls of arteries throughout the body. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a common condition in which blood pressure levels exceed normal values. According to the American Heart Association, one out of every three adults over the age of 20 years has high blood pressure.

If untreated, high blood pressure can lead to:

- Heart failure
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Vision loss
- Kidney failure

How is it measured and what is considered normal?

A blood pressure reading appears as two numbers:

Systolic: the first and higher number, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats.

Diastolic: the second and lower number, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart rests between beats.

A normal systolic blood pressure is below 120. If this number is between 120 to 139, it can indicate pre-hypertension. When the number is 140 or higher, it is considered hypertension or high blood pressure.

A normal diastolic pressure is less than 80. If it is between 80 and 89, it could mean borderline hypertension and a reading of 90 or higher is considered high blood pressure.

Risk factors and prevention

There are a number of risk factors, including:

- Smoking
- Excess weight
- Lack of exercise
- Poor diet - high in fat and cholesterol
- Alcohol consumption
- Family history
- Chronic disease such as diabetes, kidney disease, lupus

There are several steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of high blood pressure:

- Get your blood pressure checked regularly
- Eat a healthy diet - limit salt, sugar and saturated and trans fats
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active - 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Quit smoking or do not start
- Prevent or properly manage diabetes

Scarsdale Medical Group's new nephrologist, Dr. Mayra Rodriguez can help get your blood pressure under control. To make an appointment, call (914) 723-8100 or visit www.scarsdalemedical.com/nephrology.