

Appendix 7.8 Blood Pressure Basics Information Sheet

What is Blood Pressure?

- Blood pressure is the pressure of blood against the walls of your arteries.
- This pressure allows blood to flow and deliver oxygen and nutrients to the body.
- High blood pressure, or hypertension, means that there is too much pressure in your blood vessels.
- High blood pressure can cause damage to blood vessels and cause strokes, heart attacks, and heart and kidney failure, and is related to dementia and sexual problems.
- Treatment and control of high blood pressure can reduce the risk of these problems.
- As you get older, you have more of a chance of developing high blood pressure.

Why is Monitoring Your Blood Pressure Important?

- High blood pressure usually has no warning signs or symptoms.
- Regular monitoring can help ensure that high blood pressure is diagnosed before it leads to other health problems.
- If you are being treated for high blood pressure, monitoring enables you and your family physician to make sure that your medication or your lifestyle changes, are working to keep your blood pressure under control.

What do the Numbers Mean?

- We measure blood pressure with two numbers. For example, 120/80 mmHG.
- The first number is the systolic pressure, and occurs when your heart contracts to pump blood.
- Diastolic pressure is the second and lower number and occurs when your heart relaxes and fills with blood.
- For most people, blood pressure should be less than 140/90 mmHg.
- For people with diabetes or kidney disease, blood pressure should be less than 130/80 mmHg.
- Blood pressure can be difficult to assess, because it naturally fluctuates.
- Family physicians will only diagnose a person with high blood pressure if they have two or more high readings, over multiple visits.

Systolic (mm Hg)	Diastolic (mm Hg)	Definition (not diagnosis – a diagnosis of high blood pressure can only be made by a doctor)
<90	<60	Low
<130	<85	Normal
130-139	85-89	High normal (this may be considered high if you have diabetes or other serious health problems)
140-159	90-99	Mild
160-179	100-109	Moderate
180-209	110-119	Severe
≥210	≥120	Very severe



CHAP

Cardiovascular Health Awareness Program
Programme de sensibilisation à la santé cardiovasculaire

How CHAP Can Help?

- CHAP is available free of charge in your community for older adults to have their blood pressure measured, with help from a volunteer peer health educator.
- The volunteer records the reading, and other cardiovascular risk factors.
- With your consent, this information can then be sent directly to your doctor to assist in the diagnosis and management of high blood pressure.
- It can also be sent to your regular pharmacist to assist with addressing medication-related concerns.
- Volunteer Peer Health Educators will also provide you with health promotion resources on how to lower your blood pressure.

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