

# High Blood Pressure: Am I at Risk?

One in three adults have high blood pressure, and nearly one-third of them don't know they have it. High blood pressure has no symptoms. Make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly.

## Factors that contribute to high blood pressure

Several factors may contribute to high blood pressure and raise your risk for heart attack and stroke.

### Controllable Risk Factors

- **Obesity** – People with a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or higher are more likely to develop high blood pressure.
- **Eating too much salt** – A high sodium intake increases blood pressure in some people.
- **Drinking too much alcohol** – Heavy and regular use of alcohol can increase blood pressure dramatically.
- **Lack of physical activity** – An inactive lifestyle makes it easier to become overweight and increases the chance of high blood pressure.
- **Stress** – This is often mentioned as a risk factor, but stress levels are hard to measure, and responses to stress vary from person to person.

### Uncontrollable Risk Factors

- **Race** – Blacks develop high blood pressure more often than whites, and it tends to occur earlier and be more severe.
- **Heredity** – If your parents or other close blood relatives have high blood pressure, you're more likely to develop it.
- **Age** – In general, the older you get, the greater your chance of developing high blood pressure. It occurs most often in people over age 35. Men seem to develop it most often between age 35 and 55. Women are more likely to develop it after menopause.

*Source: American Heart Association*

