

**Remember:**

**Managing your blood pressure is essential for a healthier, longer life.**

- **Small changes in your lifestyle—like eating well, staying active, and reducing stress—can make a big difference.**
- **Regular monitoring and following your doctor's advice help keep hypertension under control.**
- **Take action now to protect your heart, brain, kidneys, and other body systems from the risks of high blood pressure.**



**Dr. Saravanan Kasthuri, MD**  
Interventional Radiologist  
and Endovascular Surgeon



1341 Spaulding Ave  
Richland, WA 99352



To learn more, you can  
go to [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org).

**You have the power to  
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## Contact



<https://circcare.com>



[nwes@myupdox.com](mailto:nwes@myupdox.com)



(509) 588 -7613

Understanding  
**Hypertension**  
High Blood Pressure



## 1. What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries as your heart pumps.

- **Systolic pressure (top number):** Measures pressure when your heart beats.
- **Diastolic pressure (bottom number):** Measures pressure when your heart rests between beats.

## 2. What is Hypertension?

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, occurs when this force is consistently too high. It often shows no symptoms but can lead to severe health issues.

120  
80

## 3. Risks of Hypertension

Untreated hypertension can lead to:

- **Heart Disease:** Increased risk of heart attacks and heart failure.
- **Stroke:** Damage to blood vessels in the brain.
- **Kidney Damage:** Can cause kidney failure over time.
- **Vision Loss:** Strain on the small blood vessels in your eyes.

## 4. How to Determine if You Have High Blood Pressure

- **Blood Pressure Check:** Regularly measure your blood pressure at home or during doctor visits.
- **Monitor Symptoms (if present):** Severe headaches, chest pain, or dizziness may indicate advanced issues.

## 5. Causes of High Blood Pressure

Several factors contribute to high blood pressure, including:

- **Lifestyle:** Poor diet (high salt), inactivity, obesity, and inadequate sleep.
- **Stress:** Chronic stress elevates blood pressure.
- **Family History:** Genetics can play a role.
- **Age:** Risk increases as you grow older.

## 6. Prevention and Management

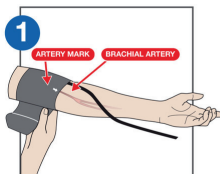
**Preventive Measures:**

- **Healthy Diet:** Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Reduce salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats.
- **Stay Active:** Aim for 30 minutes of exercise most days.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night to support overall health.
- **Avoid Tobacco and Limit Alcohol:** Both can raise blood pressure.
- **Manage Stress:** Practice relaxation techniques like meditation or yoga.

## Management:

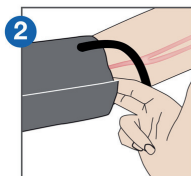
- **Take Medications:** Certain medications can reduce high blood pressure. If prescribed, take your medications as directed.

### Directions: How to apply your blood pressure cuff



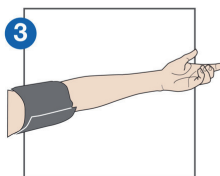
#### Step 1:

Slide the cuff onto your arm until the bottom edge is about ½" above your elbow, and the artery mark is directly over the brachial artery.



#### Step 2:

Tighten cuff until it is snug against your arm without being too tight. You should be able to fit 2 fingers between the cuff and your arm.



#### Step 3:

Sit and relax with your arm resting palm up on a table, and follow your monitor's instructions for taking your blood pressure.

	Systolic (mmHg)	Diastolic (mmHg)
Normal	<120	<80
Elevated	120-129	<80
Hypertension	>130	>80