

# LET'S TALK ABOUT UNCONTROLLED HYPERTENSION.

## PATIENT-PHARMACIST CONVERSATION RECORD

The purpose of this document is to help you understand and manage uncontrolled hypertension. It summarises the key points discussed with your pharmacist and can be used to support further conversations with your doctor about your health.



# What Is uncontrolled hypertension?



## *For patients who have already been diagnosed with hypertension.*

Uncontrolled hypertension means that your blood pressure remains above your target level (typically 130/80 mmHg or higher) even though you are taking medication and following healthy lifestyle advice.<sup>1</sup> According to the 2025 American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology (AHA/ACC) Guidelines, uncontrolled hypertension is defined as an average blood pressure above the patient's goal despite appropriate pharmacological therapy and lifestyle modification.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, uncontrolled hypertension applies generally when blood pressure remains above target regardless of the number or combination of medications used.

This condition is common and serious. The World Health Organization reports that more than 1.4 billion adults worldwide live with hypertension, but fewer than one in five have their blood pressure under control.<sup>2</sup> Persistent high blood pressure can damage the heart, brain, kidneys, and blood vessels, leading to heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and vision loss.

Uncontrolled hypertension can result from various causes — including missed medication doses, ineffective treatment, or lifestyle and system-related barriers such as high salt intake, limited access to medicines, or infrequent follow-up.

With regular monitoring and support from your pharmacist and doctor, blood pressure control can be regained. Consistent adherence to treatment, medication review, healthy lifestyle choices, and timely adjustments to therapy are key to preventing complications and improving long-term outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

With ongoing support from your pharmacist and doctor, you can regain control of your blood pressure. Your healthcare team can help you:

- Check your blood pressure regularly and record results;
- Review your medicines to ensure they are working effectively;
- Manage side effects and improve adherence;
- Identify and address lifestyle or access barriers; and
- Adjust your treatment plan or refer you for further evaluation if needed.

## For patients who may be at risk of uncontrolled hypertension

### *Why might my blood pressure still be high?*

Anyone living with high blood pressure can experience periods when it becomes uncontrolled. However, certain people may be at higher risk. You may be more likely to have uncontrolled hypertension if:

- You sometimes forget or find it difficult to take your blood pressure medicines regularly;
- You are taking several medications or have complex treatment schedules;
- You have other health conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, or obesity;
- You use tobacco, drink alcohol frequently, or consume a diet high in salt and processed foods;
- You have limited access to healthcare, regular follow-up, or blood pressure monitoring;
- You experience ongoing stress or poor sleep; or
- You are not sure what your blood pressure targets should be.

If any of these apply to you, your pharmacist can help you understand the causes, review your medicines, and create a plan to bring your blood pressure back under control.



## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO UNCONTROLLED HYPERTENSION<sup>3</sup>

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(To be completed in consultation with your pharmacist)

Uncontrolled hypertension often has more than one cause. Recognising these factors early allows your pharmacist and doctor to work with you on practical steps to regain control, such as adjusting medicines, simplifying your regimen, improving lifestyle habits, and scheduling regular reviews.

Common contributing factors include:

### 1. Medication-related:

- |                                                        |                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Missed or irregular doses     | <input type="checkbox"/> Complex treatment schedules                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Side effects or cost concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug interactions (e.g., painkillers, decongestants) |

### 2. Lifestyle-related:

- |                                              |                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High salt intake    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco or alcohol use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical inactivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress or poor sleep   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excess weight       |                                                 |

### 3. Monitoring-related:

- ☐ Irregular or infrequent blood pressure checks
- ☐ Incorrect measurement technique (cuff size, timing, posture)
- ☐ Lack of home or ambulatory blood pressure monitoring
- ☐ Not recording or sharing readings with healthcare providers

### 4. Health-system and access factors:

- ☐ Difficulty obtaining or refilling medicines
- ☐ Limited follow-up or continuity of care
- ☐ Lack of equipment or resources for self-monitoring
- ☐ Inadequate treatment adjustment despite high readings

### 5. Co-morbidities:

- |                                                                                 |                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardiovascular disease (e.g., heart disease or stroke) | <input type="checkbox"/> Obesity                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes (high blood sugar)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dyslipidaemia                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic kidney disease                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Thyroid disorders and sleep apnoea |

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff name: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# For patients with uncontrolled hypertension

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## *Why am I at risk of uncontrolled hypertension?*

Several factors can cause your blood pressure to become uncontrolled or harder to manage over time. However, people with uncontrolled hypertension may not always notice gradual changes or symptoms and may mistakenly consider these changes as normal.

Uncontrolled hypertension is a major risk factor for serious health complications. Although arteries are naturally elastic, persistently high blood pressure can cause permanent damage, making blood vessels stiff or narrow. This forces the heart to work harder to pump blood throughout the body. The higher your blood pressure, the greater the strain on your heart and organs — and the higher your overall health risk.

If left untreated or poorly controlled, hypertension can lead to complications such as kidney disease, vision loss, heart attack, heart failure, and stroke.

This leaflet has been shared with you to support a conversation with your doctor about your health. An initial assessment by your pharmacist suggests that you may be at risk of uncontrolled hypertension. Your pharmacist can help identify and document the factors that may be contributing to this risk.

If you need to discuss this with your doctor, please ask your pharmacist for guidance on the next steps. Sharing this information with your family can also help you manage your health more effectively.



## RISK FACTORS FOR UNCONTROLLED HYPERTENSION<sup>3,4</sup>

*To be completed in consultation with your pharmacist*

### MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

- ☐ Missed or irregular medication use
- ☐ Inadequate monitoring or follow-up
- ☐ High salt intake
- ☐ Physical inactivity
- ☐ Tobacco
- ☐ Excessive alcohol intake
- ☐ Excess weight or obesity
- ☐ Diet high in fat and low in fruit and vegetables
- ☐ High cholesterol
- ☐ Chronic stress
- ☐ Poor sleep quality
- ☐ Pre-existing cardiovascular or kidney disease
- ☐ Use of certain medications (e.g., NSAIDs, corticosteroids, oral contraceptives, nasal decongestants)

☐ Other:

Comment:

### NON-MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS

- ☐ Age (risk increases with age)
- ☐ Family history of hypertension
- ☐ Genetic predisposition
- ☐ Ethnicity / race

☐ Other:

Comment:

Staff name:

Date:

## Why is it important to report your symptoms?

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The symptoms of uncontrolled hypertension are often mild or may go unnoticed, especially in the early stages.<sup>5</sup> Many people with high blood pressure may not feel any obvious changes or may become used to feeling unwell without realising it's related to their condition.

Because uncontrolled hypertension can lead to serious complications affecting the heart, brain, kidneys, and other organs,<sup>3</sup> it is essential to promptly report any unusual symptoms<sup>5</sup> — such as headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, chest pain, or other signs — to your pharmacist or doctor.

Early reporting and timely management can help prevent complications and improve your overall health.

During your pharmacy visit, it is important to discuss any symptoms you may be experiencing, even if you are already taking blood pressure medicines. These can help your pharmacist identify possible signs of uncontrolled hypertension and decide whether further evaluation is needed.

### I HAVE THESE SYMPTOMS:

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*(To be completed in consultation with your pharmacist)*

- ☐ Severe headaches
- ☐ Chest pain
- ☐ Dizziness or light-headedness
- ☐ Difficulty breathing
- ☐ Nausea and/or vomiting
- ☐ Blurred vision or other vision changes
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Buzzing in the ears
- ☐ Nosebleeds
- ☐ Palpitations or irregular heartbeat
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Why is prompt and effective management of uncontrolled hypertension is important?



Hypertension is often called a “silent killer” because it may not cause noticeable symptoms for many years. However, if left undetected or **uncontrolled**, high blood pressure can lead to serious complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and loss of vision.

Uncontrolled hypertension — when blood pressure remains above target despite treatment — greatly increases these risks. Early diagnosis, regular monitoring, and effective management are essential to prevent complications.

Taking action through lifestyle changes, medication adherence, and follow-up care can help control blood pressure, slow disease progression, and lower the chance of serious health problems.

If you have not had your blood pressure checked recently or are unsure whether it is under control, speak to your healthcare provider for assessment and timely intervention.



## Uncontrolled hypertension – Frequent check-ins for better control

Since high blood pressure often has no obvious symptoms, regular follow-ups with your doctor or pharmacist are essential to ensure it remains well controlled. These frequent check-ins help track how your treatment is working and allow for adjustments when needed — especially if there are changes to your lifestyle, medication, or overall health.

Regular monitoring helps your doctor assess how well your blood pressure is controlled and determine the best treatment plan for you.



# What can you do to reduce your risk of developing uncontrolled hypertension or worsening high blood pressure?

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## What you can do now<sup>4,5</sup>

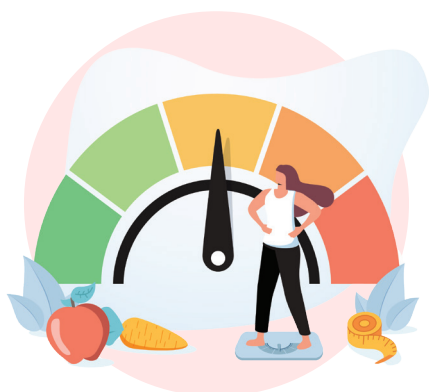
- **Monitor and control your blood pressure regularly** — at home, at the pharmacy, or during clinic visits.
- **Follow a heart-healthy diet**, rich in fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and lean protein, and low in salt, saturated fat and processed foods.
- **Maintain a healthy weight** — even a small amount of weight loss can improve your blood pressure.
- **Limit alcohol consumption and stop using tobacco** — both can help lower your blood pressure.
- **Stay physically active** — aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week.
- **Manage stress** with relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises, meditation, yoga or by connecting with support networks.
- **Understand your medicines** — take them as prescribed, know why they are important, and ask for advice if you find it hard to take them regularly.
- **Attend regular check-ups** with your healthcare provider to review your treatment and screen for related conditions such as diabetes or high cholesterol.

## References:

1. 2025 AHA/ACC/AANP/AAPA/ABC/ACCP/ACPM/AGS/AMA/ASPC/NMA/PCNA/SGIM Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Joint Committee on Clinical Practice Guidelines. *Circulation*. 2025 Sep 16;152(11):e114-e218. DOI: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000001356
2. World Health Organization (WHO). 23 September 2025. Global report on hypertension 2025: High stakes - turning evidence into action. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240115569>
3. Portuguese Pharmaceutical Society. Hypertension: control and prevention. [Internet]. 25 November 2024. [accessed: 03 July 2025]. Available at: <https://www.ordemfarmaceuticos.pt/pt/noticias/detalhes.php?id=3409>.
4. Forouzanfar MH, Liu P, Roth GA, et al. Global burden of hypertension and systolic blood pressure of at least 110 to 115 mmHg, 1990-2015. *JAMA*. 2017 Jan 10;317(2):165-182. DOI: 10.1001/jama.2016.19043.
5. American Heart Association. How to manage high blood pressure. [Internet]. [accessed: 03 July 2025]. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure>.

## LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION ADVICE

Patients should be clearly informed about the following lifestyle recommendations:



**LOSING EXCESS WEIGHT**



**EATING A HEALTHY AND  
BALANCED DIET**



**LIMITING SALT (SODIUM) INTAKE**



**ENGAGING IN REGULAR  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**



**REDUCING OR QUITTING ALCOHOL  
CONSUMPTION**



**STOP USING TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

**BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL STARTS WITH YOU –  
AND YOUR PHARMACIST IS HERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.**

# MY HYPERTENSION TREATMENT PLAN

A guide to help you track your treatment and stay on top of your heart health.

This guide was created for you — to help keep your blood pressure within a healthy range. Your pharmacist and doctor can help you fill it in.

If you're ever unsure about anything, just ask — they're here to support you.

| Patient information | Emergency contact | Doctor contact information | Risk factors                                                                |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name:               | Name:             | Doctor's name:             | Cardiovascular risk:                                                        |
| Date of birth:      | Phone:            | Institution/Clinic:        | Diabetes:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No    |
| History:            | Relationship:     | Phone:                     | Tobacco use:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |

***“You have the power to lower your risk”***

Talk to your pharmacist and doctor about your treatment and lifestyle choices.

TARGET BLOOD PRESSURE:

\_\_\_\_\_ mmHg / \_\_\_\_\_ mmHg

## MY MEDICATIONS:

Use this table to keep track of your blood pressure medicines — how they have been prescribed, whether you're taking them as instructed, and any issues you may be experiencing

| Medicine name | Prescribed dose and schedule | Am I taking it as prescribed?                               | If you're not taking a medicine as prescribed, use this space to write why* |
|---------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               |                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                                                                             |
|               |                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                                                                             |
|               |                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                                                                             |
|               |                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |                                                                             |

**\*Here are some common reasons:**

- Cost
- I forget
- Side effects
- Not sure why I need it
- Schedule is hard to follow
- Other (please specify)

## MY LIFESTYLE GOALS AND PRECAUTIONS:

Use this table to review important lifestyle goals that can help control your blood pressure. Your pharmacist or doctor can help you understand which goals are right for you, any precautions to consider, and provide additional advice.

| Which precautions should I take? | I am ready to work on this goal | Additional information / notes |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Losing excess weight             | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Eating a healthy, balanced diet  | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Limiting salt intake             | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Being physically active          | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Limiting alcohol consumption     | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Stopping tobacco use             | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Taking medication as prescribed  | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Managing stress levels           | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Getting good-quality sleep       | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |
| Other: _____                     | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                |

# HOW TO MEASURE BLOOD PRESSURE

## 30 MINUTES BEFORE MEASURING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

- Do not smoke
- Do not exercise
- Do not drink caffeinated beverages (e.g., tea, coffee, cola)
- Do not drink alcohol

## WHEN AND HOW TO TAKE READINGS

- Measure your blood pressure twice a day using the same arm – once in the morning before taking your medication, and once in the evening before your meal.
- For each measurement, take two readings, 1 to 2 minutes apart, and record the average

## REST AND PREPARE PROPERLY

- Sit quietly and rest for at least 5 minutes in a calm room
- Sit upright with your back straight and supported
- Keep feet flat on the floor and legs uncrossed
- Do not talk, move or engage in any activity during the measurement
- Rest your arm comfortably at heart level on a flat surface

## USE THE RIGHT DEVICE AND CUFF

- Use a properly validated and calibrated blood pressure monitor
- Choose a cuff that fits your arm size

## PLACE THE CUFF CORRECTLY

- Place the cuff on the bare upper arm
- Position it 1–2 finger widths above the bend of the elbow
- Ensure the cuff is snug but not too tight

## Recommended blood pressure levels<sup>1</sup>

| Blood pressure category                               | Systolic mm Hg (upper number) |        | Diastolic mm Hg (lower number) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Normal                                                | Less than 120                 | and    | Less than 80                   |
| Elevated                                              | 120-129                       | and    | Less than 80                   |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1            | 130-139                       | or     | 80-89                          |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2            | 140 or higher                 | or     | 90 or higher                   |
| Hypertensive Crisis (Consult your doctor immediately) | Higher than 180               | and/or | Higher than 120                |

## BLOOD PRESSURE HIGHER THAN 180/120 mm Hg IS A CRISIS!

- Wait a few minutes and recheck your blood pressure.
- If your blood pressure is still high and there are no other signs or symptoms, seek advice from your healthcare professional immediately.
- If you are experiencing signs of possible organ damage – such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness or weakness, changes in vision, or difficulty speaking – **CALL THE EMERGENCY NUMBER IMMEDIATELY.**

## References:

1. American Heart Association. Home blood pressure monitoring. [Internet] 2024 [accessed: 18 July 2025]. Available at: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/understanding-blood-pressure-readings/monitoring-your-blood-pressure-at-home>.
2. Goupil R, Tsuyuki RT, Santesso N, et al. Hypertension Canada guideline for the diagnosis and treatment of hypertension in adults in primary care. CMAJ. 2025 May 25;197(20):E549-E564. DOI: 10.1503/cmaj.241770.

# BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING RECORD

## HOW TO MEASURE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AT HOME

To keep your blood pressure under control, it's important to measure it twice a day:

- **Once in the morning**, before taking your medication
- **Once in the evening**, before your evening meal

Before measuring your blood pressure:

- Avoid tea, coffee, or tobacco for **at least 30 minutes** beforehand
- Rest quietly in a seated position for **5 minutes**
- Sit with your **back supported**, feet flat on the floor, and your **arm supported at heart level** during the measurement

*For detailed instructions, please refer to the "How to measure blood pressure" poster provided by your pharmacist.*

## PATIENT DETAILS

| Patient information | Emergency contact | Doctor contact information | Risk factors                                                                |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name:               | Name:             | Doctor's name:             | Cardiovascular risk:                                                        |
| Date of birth:      | Phone:            | Institution/Clinic:        | Diabetes:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No    |
| History:            | Relationship:     | Phone:                     | Tobacco use:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No |

## RISK FACTOR (PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

|                                          |                          |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Age                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tobacco use                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical inactivity                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Diabetes                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unhealthy diet                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| High cholesterol                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overweight / Obesity                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family history of cardiovascular disease | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| High stress levels                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: _____                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## ADDITIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

| Measurement                  | Value |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Total Cholesterol            |       |
| HDL Cholesterol              |       |
| Fasting Blood Glucose        |       |
| HbA1c (Glycated Haemoglobin) |       |
| Other: _____                 |       |

## BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING

[illegible]