

## Patient Information Hypertension

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Hypertension is the same thing as high blood pressure. By definition, hypertension usually means blood pressure over 140/90 mmHg.
- Usually, this condition is secondary to the blood vessels constricting or squeezing, and usually there is no particular cause. Occasionally there may be another health issue or genetic predisposition to having high blood pressure.
- If left uncontrolled, hypertension can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney problems.
- The CDC estimates that \*31.9% of adults over age 20 have hypertension.

### SYMPTOMS

- Most commonly this condition is asymptomatic.
- Hypertension can cause headaches, especially if blood pressure is very high.
- Some patients will describe a rushing sensation in their ears (especially when lying on a pillow), fatigue, leg swelling, and chest pain (occasionally).

### DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- Blood pressure check with a blood pressure cuff
- Blood work may help to look for both causes of hypertension and effects of elevated blood pressure on the kidney function and electrolytes.
- An echocardiogram may occasionally be recommended to look for secondary effects of elevated blood pressure on the heart.

### TREATMENT

- Blood pressure lowering medications (antihypertensive drugs)
- Exercise
- Decrease salt intake
- Eat two small squares of dark chocolate a day (85%+ cocoa dark chocolate)
- Drink one cup of beet juice a day

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at [www.highlandheart.urmc.edu](http://www.highlandheart.urmc.edu)

\* National Center for Health Statistics. Health, United States, 2012