

# High blood pressure (hypertension)

Blood pressure reflects the pressure in the arteries. The doctor always measures two values: systolic pressure and the diastolic pressure. The systolic pressure is the highest pressure that is reached when the heart contracts and propels the blood. The diastolic pressure is the pressure between two heartbeats, when the heart relaxes.

## Consequences of high blood pressure

Constant pressure on the vessels due to high blood pressure, gradually causes damage and narrowing of the blood vessels. This reduces the blood supply to the various organs. This can cause damage to your organs, such as kidneys, heart muscle, arteries, brain and eyes.

## High blood pressure and kidneys

Kidneys and blood pressure have a lot to do with each other. The kidneys largely regulate the fluid content, the salt content and the amount of blood in the bloodstream. The level of blood pressure is related to this. Kidney disease can increase blood pressure. Conversely, high blood pressure can cause abnormalities in the kidneys.

More information? Take a look at the website of the Dutch Heart Foundation. (<http://www.hartstichting.nl/risicofactoren/gids-bloeddruk>)

## Tests

To determine if your blood pressure is elevated, several measurements are needed. These blood pressure measurements should be done over a period of at least 3 to 6 months. Your doctor will diagnose high blood pressure if the blood pressure is above the norm of 140/90 mmHg with regular measurements. Your doctor may also do a physical examination, examine your urine to see if there are any proteins in it, to detect kidney damage.

Other additional research can be found below.

## Blood tests

In blood tests, we take one or more tubes of blood with a hollow needle. This blood is then examined in the laboratory by an analyst. Blood tests or tests of urine or stool are necessary when the general practitioner or specialist wants to find out more about your health. The doctor also has research done to determine the course of disease and the effect of a treatment.

## Heart film (electrocardiogram, E.C.G.)

With a heart film (E.C.G.) we measure the electrical activity of your heart muscle. The E.C.G. device makes this visible in a graph on a screen or on paper. It's a quick and safe investigation that doesn't hurt.



## Treatments

The treatment of high blood pressure usually consists of lifestyle advice, a salt-restricted diet, medications or a combination thereof. The choice of a particular treatment mainly depends on the severity of the high blood pressure. If the doctor has identified kidney damage as the cause or effect of the elevated blood pressure, your doctor will adjust the treatment accordingly.

Do you have any questions? Contact your doctor or internist.