



## **Hypertension: Keep it out of your workforce**

Undiagnosed and uncontrolled hypertension can lead to acute and costly situations such as heart attacks and strokes for your employees. The wear and tear on blood vessels from undiagnosed or uncontrolled hypertension can lead to expensive conditions like high cholesterol, headaches, vision disturbances and kidney problems.

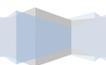
Hypertension is one of the easiest and most inexpensive conditions to screen through an employee wellness program. Offering monthly, onsite blood pressure screenings can help to detect hypertension before it gets out of control.

Hypertension is a term used to describe high blood pressure. While normal blood pressure is 120/80 or below, you are considered to have high blood pressure if your systolic pressure (top number) is over 140 most of the time and your diastolic pressure (bottom number) is over 90 most of the time. You are considered to have pre-hypertension when your systolic blood pressure is between 120 and 139 most of the time and your diastolic blood pressure is between 80 and 89 most of the time.

Primary hypertension, also known as essential hypertension, gradually develops over many years. Secondary hypertension is caused by an underlying condition and appears suddenly, which causes higher blood pressure. Some conditions and medications can lead to secondary hypertension. Kidney problems, adrenal gland tumors and certain defects in the blood vessels you are born with are some conditions that put you at a higher risk. Medications that can lead to secondary hypertension include are birth control pills, cold remedies, decongestants, OTC pain relievers and some prescription drugs.

Employees are at a higher risk of hypertension if they are obese, drink too much alcohol, smoke, have a family history of high blood pressure, are African-American, have diabetes or eat too much salt. There usually are not any signs or symptoms of hypertension, but if employees see any of these symptoms, they should see your doctor right away.

- Confusion
- Ear noise or buzzing
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Irregular heartbeat
- Nosebleed
- Vision changes



Regular visits to a doctor can help manage hypertension. There are many different ways to treat hypertension, medication being one. Some medications include alpha or beta blockers and Angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors. Good ways to manage blood pressure include exercising, losing weight if overweight and following a healthy diet.

Prevention is the main key with hypertension. To prevent hypertension:

- Avoid smoking
- Women should not consume more than 1 alcoholic drink per day for women, 2 per day for men.
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products.
- Exercise regularly for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- People with diabetes should control blood sugar.
- Lose weight if overweight. Extra weight adds strain on the heart.
- Work to manage stress.

For assistance in developing a more comprehensive wellness plan for your employees, contact Sharon Rateike, corporate wellness program coordinator at (920) 568-5018 or [Sharon.Rateike@forthc.com](mailto:Sharon.Rateike@forthc.com).

