



## **What is hypertension?**

Hypertension or high blood pressure is a serious medical condition especially if it goes undetected or untreated. Blood pressure is the force exerted against your body's blood vessels. It is determined by the amount of blood the heart pumps and the resistance of the arteries. The top number of the blood pressure reading measures when the heart is pumping blood to the body and the bottom number measures when the heart is filling with blood. Resting blood pressure should be below 135/85.

If your blood pressure consistently remains above this you have hypertension. With hypertension the blood vessels become tight and constricted and cause an increased workload on the heart to pump blood out to the body. Beside its effect on the heart itself, high blood pressure if untreated can eventually cause damage to other organs and lead to such conditions as heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, peripheral artery disease and eye damage.

You can control hypertension through a variety of heart healthy lifestyle changes. These include following a heart healthy low fat, low cholesterol, sodium restricted diet, quit smoking, following a regular exercise regime at least 3-4 times a week, taking your blood pressure medication as prescribed, getting your blood pressure checked regularly and managing stressful situations as best as possible.

For more information on our hypertension clinic call our office at (847) 336-1600.