



# CITY OF HARTFORD

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## **MAY IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE EDUCATION MONTH** **NEWS RELEASE**

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month. About 75 million people in the United States have high blood pressure, which is called hypertension. Hypertension increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States and Connecticut. Blood pressure is written as two numbers. The first (systolic) number represents the pressure when the heart beats. The second (diastolic) number represents the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

<b>Blood Pressure</b>	<b>Optimal</b>	<b>Prehypertension</b>	<b>Hypertension</b>
Systolic	Less than 120	120-139	140 or higher
Diastolic	Less than 80	80-89	90 or higher

Blood pressure that is slightly higher than normal is called Prehypertension. People with Prehypertension are more likely to develop high blood pressure than people with normal blood pressure levels. Some facts:

- Almost 90% of adults ages 45-64 will develop high blood pressure during the remainder of their lifetime
- About 23% of American adults ages 20 years or older have Prehypertension
- One out of every three U.S adults ages 20 years or older have hypertension
- Nearly one out of five people have hypertension and are not aware they have it
- High blood pressure is more common among blacks than whites. About 44% of black women have high blood pressure

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease.

### **Preventing and Controlling High Pressure**

- Have your blood pressure checked regularly
- Maintain a normal body weight (body mass index of 18.5-24.9)
- Keep up physical activity (30 minutes, 5 days a week) of moderate intensity aerobic activity (i.e., brisk walking) every week, and muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups
- Follow a healthy eating plan of a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low in sodium
- Quit smoking
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation (less than 2 drinks per day for men and less than 1 drink per day for women)
- If you have high blood pressure and are prescribed medication(s), take as directed

“The residents of Hartford deserve the best possible chance for a healthy future. By educating ourselves and taking the steps necessary to control our blood pressure, we will take another great step toward a ‘Healthy Hartford’,” stated Carlos Rivera, Director of the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services.

