



KOKNI MEDICAL TEAM
For a healthier community

THE HEALTH HUB

Issue 4 / Oct 12, 2025

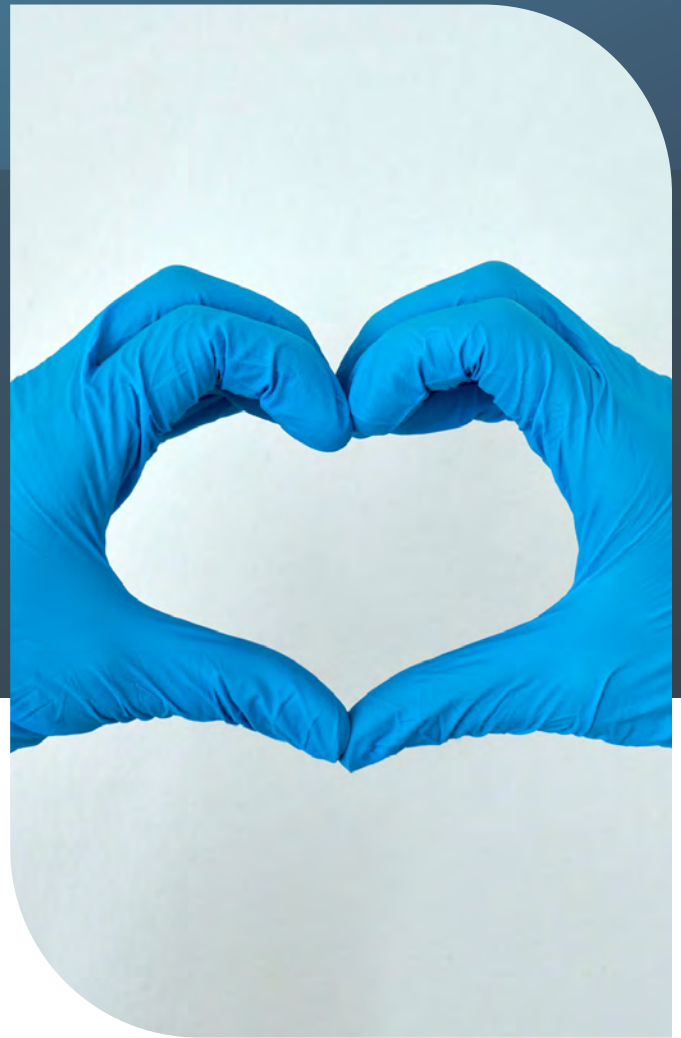
WELCOME NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Assalamalaikum w.w.b.

It gives me great pleasure in inviting you back to enrich your knowledge in our 4th edition of the quarterly KMA Health Hub.

We thank Allah [SWT] who brought us all together, some from overseas, cross county as well as our neighboring countries, to mark our 100th year celebration. The celebration highlighted togetherness and the continued efforts to bring the youth together to understand our past present and to help build our future.

We were successful in ensuring the blood drive was present together with the cardiac screening which brought out a lot of awareness in terms of comorbidities.



We successfully collected 10 pints of blood on the culture day which will go a long way in assisting someone in the near future. For that I thank my brothers and sisters who volunteered in this selfless act.

This will be the last edition this year and we invite you to engage us, the KMA Medical Subcommittee, on your suggestions of topics you would like more information on. May Allah SWT empower us with this knowledge to serve our community better.



Dr. Imran B Khares
Consultant Pediatrician
Senior editor, The Health Hub
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Teething is one of those milestones that every parent looks forward to — and dreads at the same time. The first tiny tooth is a cause for celebration, but the fussiness, drooling, and sleepless nights that often come with it can leave parents searching for answers. Unfortunately, teething has long been surrounded by myths and misconceptions, some of which have been passed down for generations. From blaming fevers on teething to trying questionable home remedies, many of these myths can lead to unnecessary worry — or even harm. Don't worry — we're here to sort through the old wives' tales, bust the myths, and share what actually works, so you can survive this milestone with your sanity (mostly) intact.



Teething myths debunked

Myth #1: Teething causes diarrhea

Teething is a milestone in every child's life, the appearance of their first teeth elicits similar exhilaration to when they first start walking. Normally the eruption of deciduous teeth begins when other changes in the infant's immune system, growth and development are also occurring; that is, around six months of age. This is coincidentally, when infants have lost most of their maternally derived antibodies' protection. Additionally, they become very curious at that age and begin to explore by putting things into their mouth resulting in infections which can cause diarrhea. **TEETHING DOES NOT CAUSE DIARRHEA**, you must see a doctor if your child is having diarrhea, don't blame the teething!



Teething myths debunked

Myth #2: Teething causes fever

Similar to the previous myth, as mentioned, along with changes in the child's immune system and loss of maternally derived antibodies. This predisposes an infant to a variety of infections which can cause fevers. Babies may have episodes of elevated body temperature during this period due to immunisations, being overdressed, crying or an infection such as a cold. Teething may raise the body temperature ever so slightly however, high temperatures over 38 degrees Celsius are not due to teething.



Teething myths debunked

Myth #3: Teething must be treated

Teething is a normal phenomenon that occurs to every normal child around the age of 6 months, but this time may vary depending on different individuals.

Teething is a process in which a part of your own body is emerging into the oral cavity, there is no reason for it to be treated as a disease. It may be accompanied with excessive drooling and irritability but all in all it is a normal process which does not need intervention.

Attempting to treat the irritability with an over-the-counter teething gel can be hazardous to you child's health. Teething gels should not be used in children under the age of 2 years..



Teething myths debunked

Myth #4: Teething must be painful

You would be surprised that not all children experience painful episodes of teething. Often the new teeth in the baby's mouth take us by surprise. For many children it is actually a pain-free experience.

The inherent danger in the persistence of teething myths is that, signs and symptoms of some diseases and conditions may be ignored if they are viewed as being merely a part of teething process. Such behaviour could sometimes be detrimental to the child's health



Skip the Risky Remedies

You might hear suggestions like rubbing honey, or over-the-counter teething gels/powders on your baby's gums — but these aren't safe.

- Honey can cause infant botulism in babies under one
- Teething gels and powders can contain ingredients that numb the mouth or aren't recommended for infants and may cause serious side effects.

Pro Tip:

Soak a clean washcloth in breastmilk or clean water and freeze and hand over to baby to soothe itchy gums.

Teething rings work too (make sure they are sterilized frequently), even a gentle gum massage with your fingers works wonders!

When in doubt always consult a paediatrician or dentist!



Dr. Aliya I Gothey, DDS
Dental Surgeon

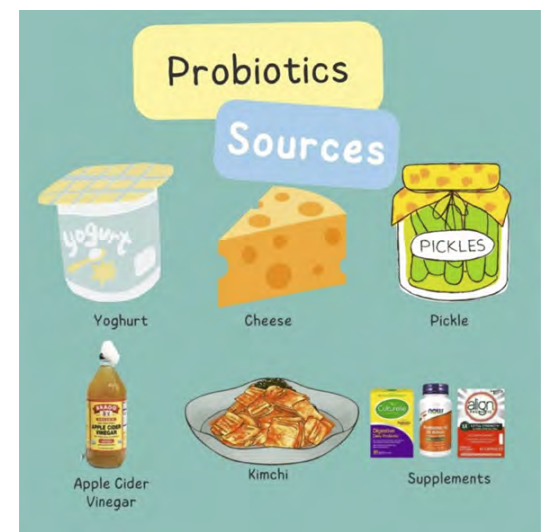


The PROs of Probiotics

Our entire digestive system consists of various microscopic organisms [consisting of over a thousand species of bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites] that help break down certain complex carbohydrates and dietary fibers. Gut bacteria on their own assist in metabolizing bile in the intestines. This process therefore ensures break down of fats enhancing digestion.

What are Probiotics?

Probiotics are living microorganisms consisting of beneficial bacteria and yeast that provide our bodies a health benefit when consumed. Residing naturally in the digestive system they help maintain a healthy balance of gut flora. They are recognized as harmless due to their ability to survive in the body, to cure and prevent diseases. The commonest species are *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*.



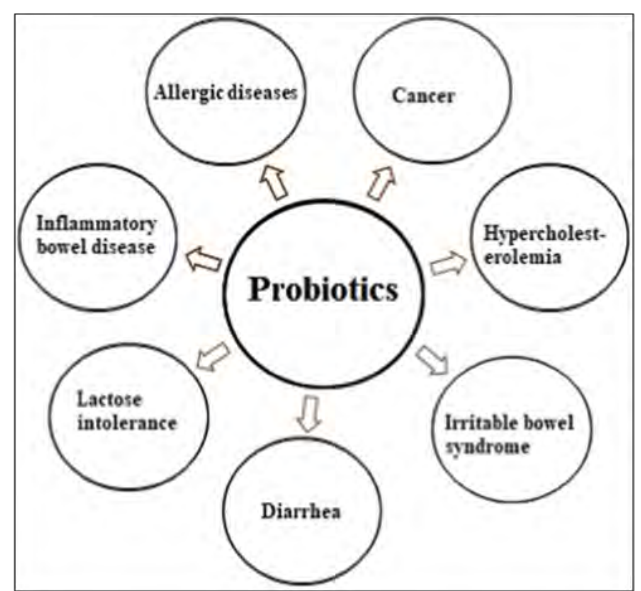
What are Prebiotics?

Our gut also consists of prebiotics. **Prebiotics** are high fiber foods that serve as **“food” for probiotics** [our good gut-bacteria], allowing them to function properly and effectively. They carry on to improve our overall gut health by selectively stimulating the growth and activity of one or a limited number of bacteria in the colon.

How do they work?

Probiotics together with prebiotics work by restoring and maintaining the balance of good and bad bacteria in the gut. They help by;

- Slowing or avoiding the growth of harmful bacteria
- Stimulating the growth of good bacteria
- Enhancing nutrient absorption
- Strengthening the gut barrier function
- Encourage overall improved immunity



THE PROS

Improved Digestive Health

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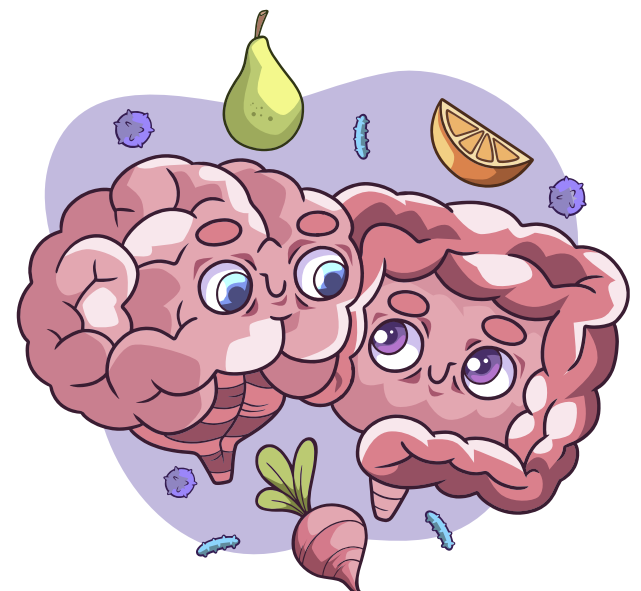


Enhanced Immunity

A significant portion of the immune system resides in the gut. Probiotics stimulate the production of antibodies and enhance the activity of immune cells, providing better protection against infections and illnesses.

Mental Health and Mood Regulation

Emerging research suggests a strong connection between the gut and brain, known as the gut-brain axis. Probiotics influences production of serotonin, which regulates mood and emotions. Studies have shown that certain strains, like *Lactobacillus helveticus* and *Bifidobacterium longum*, can help reduce anxiety and depression symptoms.



Who should not take prebiotics or probiotics?

Individuals with small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), should not consume probiotics or prebiotics, as these may worsen their symptoms. However, a new study suggests that some strains of probiotics might actually help improve IBS symptoms. For this reason, if you have IBS, speak with your doctor first to determine if probiotics may help you. As with all supplements, you may want to consult a healthcare professional knowledgeable about probiotics.

Conclusion

There is an intricate connection between diet and health, which makes us realize how important maintaining a good diet is. The use of probiotics and prebiotics has been highly recommended to improve immunity and general health thus to start off, small amounts can be consumed with gradually increasing portions as they will help promote the most ideal balance between good and bad gut bacteria.

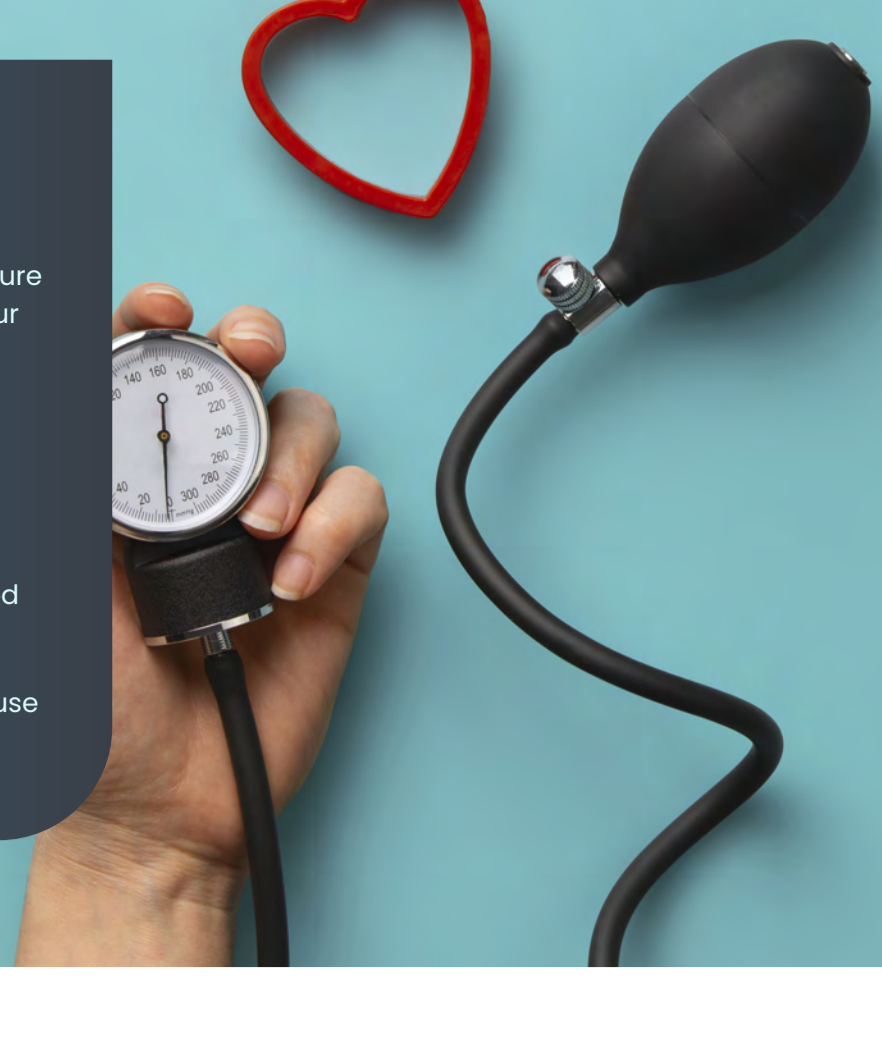


Nazma Mukri
Biotechnologist

High Blood Pressure

Quick Facts

- It's important to have your blood pressure measured and to understand what your numbers mean.
- High blood pressure is a 'silent killer.' - Most of the time there are no obvious symptoms.
- Certain physical traits and lifestyle choices can raise your risk of high blood pressure.
- Untreated high blood pressure can cause [heart attack](#), [stroke](#) and other [health threats](#).



High blood pressure is also known as hypertension. It occurs when the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels is too high.

Hypertension can lead to many serious problems such as heart attack and stroke.

It can affect all age groups: children, young adults, adults and older adults. The prevalence in Kenya is 25% to 35%. One in four Kenyan adults has hypertension. Its awareness, treatment, and control rates remain low in Kenya.

During both our medical camp in 2024 and the cardiac screening at the 100 year culture events day, we detected almost 75% of patients screened, were positive for hypertension. It is therefore public health crises in our community and we must address this very seriously not just with your doctor but as a family unit and community.

Causes of High Blood Pressure

Lifestyle
Poor diet, lack of physical activity, smoking, excess alcohol intake, and stress.

Genetics
A family history of high blood pressure increases the risk.

Underlying conditions
Obesity, diabetes, kidney disease, and sleep apnea can contribute.

Know your numbers

Because hypertension is so silent, many of us don't even know we have it yet alone have any symptoms of it. The only way to know you have high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked regularly at home or at the clinic and not just use one reading but consider looking at trends that you want improved as an individual or as a family. The ultimate diagnosis of high blood pressure will need to be made by a health care professional better by an Internal Medicine Physician.

The provider will examine you and ask about medicines you take. They will ask if you have family history of high blood pressure and about any health conditions you have. They will also check your blood pressure and weight, examine your heart, lungs, and eyes. You may need any of the following tests:

- An ambulatory blood pressure monitor (ABPM)** is a device that you wear. ABPM measures your blood pressure while you do your regular daily activities. It records your blood pressure every 15 to 30 minutes during the day. It also records your blood pressure every 15 minutes to 1 hour at night. The recorded blood pressures help your physician know if you have hypertension not seen at your appointment.
- Blood tests** may help healthcare providers find the cause of your hypertension. Blood tests can also help find other health problems caused by hypertension.
- Urine tests** will be done to check your kidney function. Kidney problems can increase your risk for hypertension.

Before You Measure

- No smoking, caffeinated beverages, alcohol, or exercise 30 minutes prior
- Use a validated device with the correct cuff size (visit [Validate BP](#) to find a device you can trust)
- Empty your bladder
- Sit quietly for more than 5 minutes and do not talk

Proper Positioning

- Sit upright with back supported, feet on floor, and legs uncrossed
- Rest your arm comfortably on a flat surface at heart level
- Wrap the cuff on your bare skin above the bend of the elbow, not over clothing

During Measurement

- Stay relaxed and do not talk
- Take at least two readings, 1 minute apart
- Record all results once measurement is completed and share them with your health care professional to help confirm your office blood pressure category

American Heart Association recommended office blood pressure categories

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)	and	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130-139	or	80-89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms**, call 911)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

BLOOD PRESSURE HIGHER THAN 180/120 MM Hg MAY BE A HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY*

- Wait a few minutes and take blood pressure again
- If your blood pressure is still high and there are no other signs or symptoms, contact your health care professional
- If you are experiencing signs of possible organ damage, such as chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness/weakness, change in vision or difficulty speaking, call 911

Learn more at [heart.org/BP](#)

*Symptoms: chest pain, shortness of breath, back pain, numbness, weakness, change in vision, or difficulty speaking

Blood pressure and the circulatory system

Blood pressure is the result of two forces. The first force (systolic pressure) happens as blood pumps out of the heart and into the arteries. The second force (diastolic pressure) is created as the heart rests between heart beats. These two forces are each represented by numbers in a blood pressure reading.

When your heart beats it pumps blood around your body. As the blood moves it pushes against the sides of blood vessels called arteries. The strength of this pushing is your blood pressure.

HIGH blood pressure

also called hypertension, puts too much force on your artery walls. Over time this can lead to damaged arteries and increase your risk of heart attack and stroke

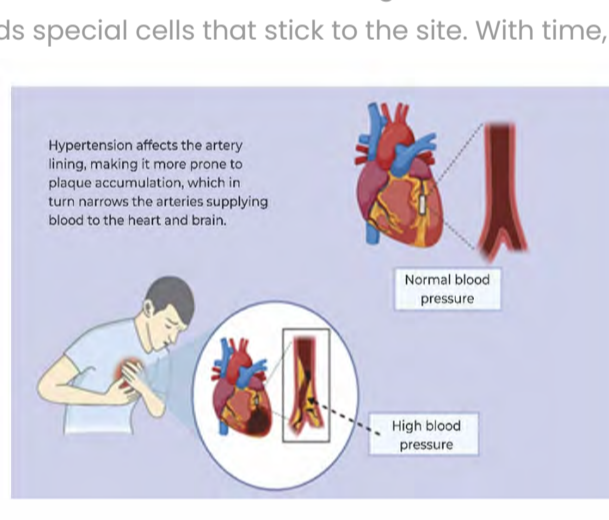
Most people don't know if they have high blood pressure as often there are no symptoms. The only way to find out is to get it checked

62% OF PEOPLE admitted to hospital with a heart attack have high blood pressure

it can also lead to problems with your eyes and kidneys

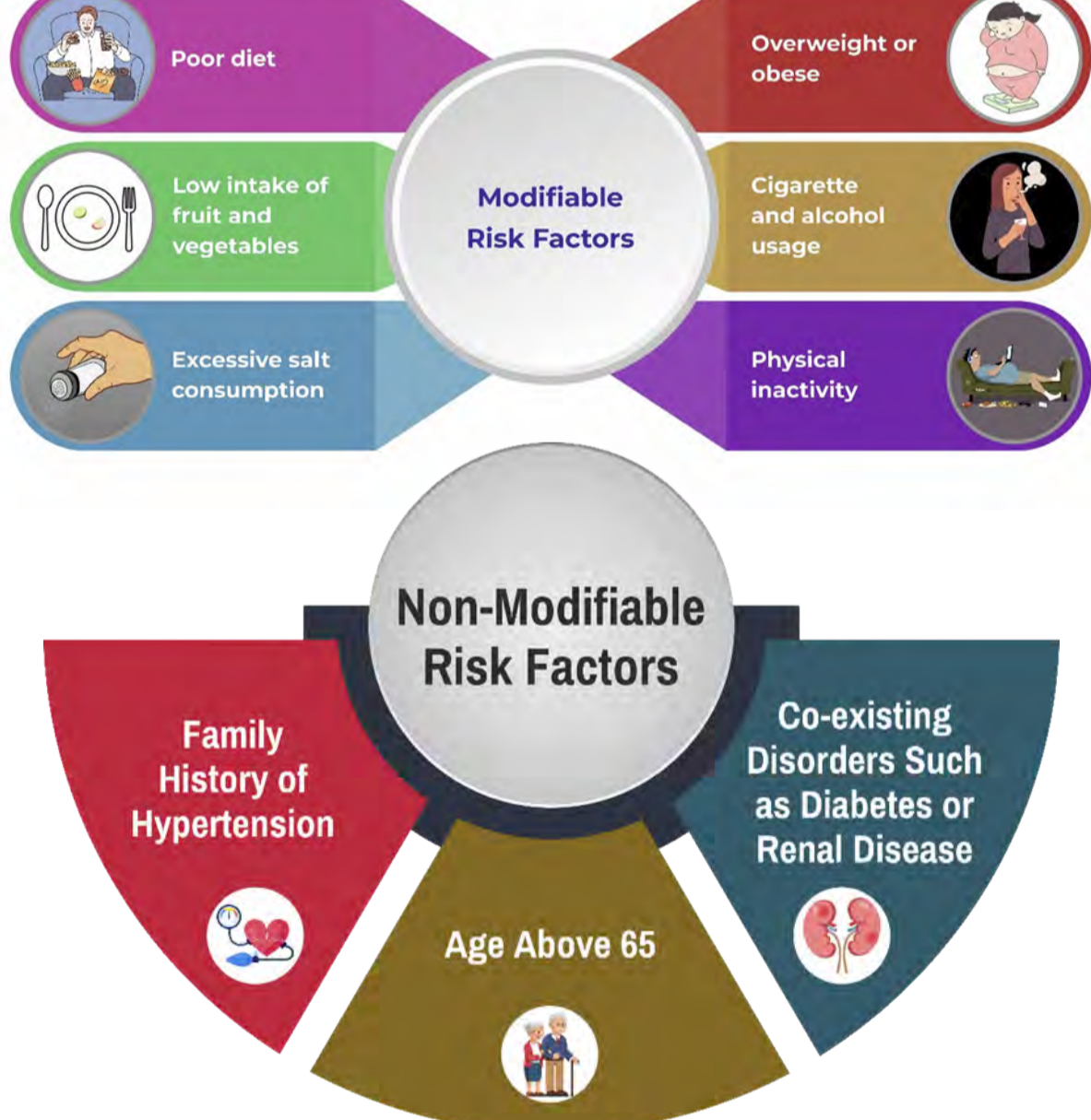
The damage starts in your arteries and heart

When blood pressure is high for too long, it can damage the walls of blood vessels, causing them to develop tiny tears. To fix these damaged areas, the body sends special cells that stick to the site. With time, cholesterol and fats may also build up at these damaged spots, forming plaque. As plaque slowly builds, it can make the inside of the arteries narrower. This narrowing can block the flow of blood, further increasing blood pressure as well as reduce blood and oxygen flow to the heart. This can lead to chest discomfort, known as angina, or even a heart attack. Hypertension can also cause a stroke by rupturing or blocking arteries that supply blood and oxygen to the brain. However, effective treatment of hypertension significantly reduces the risk of heart-related diseases.



What increases my risk for hypertension?

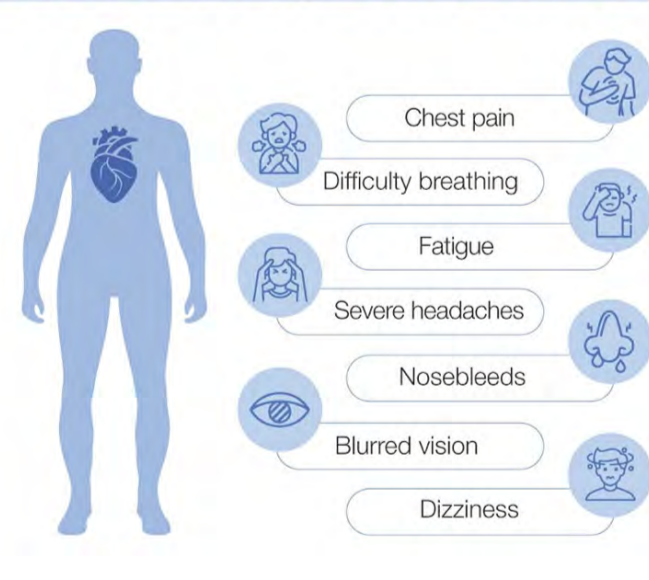
Hypertension typically develops over time and can be attributed to unhealthy lifestyle choices. The causes can be either modifiable risk factors (one can take measures to change them) or non-modifiable risk factors (they cannot be changed).



Symptoms of High Blood Pressure?

Symptoms and Signs of Hypertension

Hypertension has few visible symptoms. However, a hypertensive crisis can cause severe headaches, chest pain, dizziness, difficulty in breathing, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision or other vision changes, anxiety, confusion, buzzing in the ears, nosebleeds, abnormal heart rhythm.



How to manage Hypertension and Cardiovascular disease risks?

With proper care and lifestyle changes, we can manage our hypertension and reduce the risk of cardiovascular risk. Some of the important steps one can follow to reduce the risk are

- Medication management**
 - Adhere to the prescribed medication: Establish a routine for taking medications by setting reminders. Consult the clinician before stopping or changing the prescribed medication.
 - Conduct regular check-ups to monitor the blood pressure and adjust medications if necessary.
- Monitoring blood pressure**
 - Learn how to use a home blood pressure monitor correctly. Keep a record of blood pressure regularly and seek medical attention if there is any fluctuation.
 - Understand the target blood pressure range and the significance of reaching and maintaining it.
- Recognizing warning signs**
 - Learn to recognize symptoms that may indicate a complication of hypertension or cardiovascular disease such as chest pain, shortness of breath, severe headaches, dizziness, or sudden weakness.
 - Seek immediate medical attention or call emergency services if there are any concerning symptoms.

Lifestyle Modifications

- Healthy eating**
Adopt a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products. Limit the consumption of processed foods, sodium (salt), saturated and trans fats and sugary beverages.
- Salt reduction**
Limit sodium intake to <math>< 2,300\text{ mg}</math> per day.
- Regular physical activity**
Engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week.
- Weight management**
Maintain a healthy weight by balancing calorie intake and physical activity. Reducing even 5-10% of the body weight can significantly lower blood pressure.
- Moderate alcohol consumption**
Moderate alcohol consumption by limiting one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.
- Smoking cessation**
Smoking damages blood vessels and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Hence, it is recommended to quit smoking and avoid second-hand smoke.

References:

- High Blood Pressure –Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2025 [CDC.ORG](#)
- Hypertension American Heart Association – [Hypertension AHA.ORG](#)



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