

## **HYPERTENSION INFORMATION SHEET**

**Known as the "silent killer", high blood pressure (hypertension) rarely has obvious symptoms.** If left untreated, high blood pressure increases your risk of a heart attack or stroke. The only way of knowing there is a problem is to have your blood pressure measured.

### **Why should I attend my blood pressure review?**

Your blood pressure readings may change overtime, and although your blood pressure is well controlled at one review, it may not be at another. Left untreated, high blood pressure increases your risk of having a heart attack or a stroke. It can also cause damage to the kidneys and to the blood vessels at the back of your eyes. Your review appointment is a regular opportunity to discuss changes to your lifestyle and treatment that will help to keep your blood pressure controlled. Other risk factors you may have for blood pressure, heart disease and stroke can also be checked for at the appointment. The appointment is an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns you have about your health and medication.

### **What will happen at my appointment?**

The nurse will discuss your condition with you and ask specific questions to find out if you are having any problems. She will ask about your lifestyle and your medication and check your height and weight, along with your blood pressure and pulse. An irregular pulse is a risk factor for having a stroke. She will also perform some blood tests. She will then be able to advise you about any changes she would recommend. If needed, she will refer you to a doctor for further review.

### **What lifestyle changes will help me?**

- Stopping smoking. This will reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease, COPD and cancer. You can get help and support from 0800 052 5855 and [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)
- Reducing your intake of foods high in saturated fat such as butter, cheese, cakes and biscuits.
- Increasing your regular exercise if needed. Advice can be obtained from [www.prescription4exercise.com](http://www.prescription4exercise.com)
- Reducing your salt intake to less than 6g a day
- Reducing your intake of caffeine rich drinks e.g. tea, coffee, some fizzy drinks
- Weight loss if your BMI is greater than 25
- Reduce alcohol intake to 14 units a week for women and 21 units a week for men. For help and support contact 0300 555 5999 and [www.bdaat.co.uk](http://www.bdaat.co.uk)

### **What tests may help me?**

- Blood pressure measurement
- Diabetes screen
- Cholesterol measurement
- Kidney function testing

### **What medication may help me?**

- Anti-hypertensives. There are many medications available that can reduce blood pressure. These can be discussed at your review. Should you be having side effects with a particular medication, please discuss this so an alternative can be prescribed.
- Statins to lower cholesterol e.g. simvastatin, atorvastatin.