



HEALTH LETTER

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Board Certified
Internal Medicine

Jerry M. Roth, MD, FACP
www.myahphysicians.org/roth

501 Street Road, # 101
Southampton, PA 18966

Hypertension

High blood pressure or hypertension is one of the most common medical conditions affecting millions of Americans. **Because hypertension has virtually no symptoms and can lead to heart attack, stroke, and death without warning, it is known as the silent killer.** In order to effectively diagnose and treat hypertension, a simple blood pressure check can determine whether you are at risk of developing hypertension or have high blood pressure. Once high blood pressure is diagnosed, then efforts to modify diet, reduce weight, lower salt intake and increase exercise may all be effective in lowering blood pressure. If the blood pressure remains above acceptable levels despite these efforts, then medications are available to control hypertension.

The ideal blood pressure is 120/80. It is acceptable in most situations to have blood pressure elevations up to 140/85 before considering treatment with medications. However once the blood pressure goes above this number consistently for long periods, the risks of damage to the blood vessels which supply the heart, brain, kidneys begin to increase. The longer that you have uncontrolled hypertension and the higher your blood pressure rises will increase your risk of complications from high blood pressure. In addition, other factors such as heart disease, diabetes, and smoking significantly accelerate the damaging effects of hypertension.

Once your doctor determines that medications are necessary to treat high blood pressure, then medications are chosen tailored to your individual needs. If the blood pressure is persistently high, for example 170/90, then several medications may be needed in order to effectively control the blood pressure. Although some people are concerned about the side effects of blood pressure medicines, the side effects can usually be addressed, and are much less serious than the risk of heart attack and stroke from uncontrolled hypertension.

Diets that are low in salt (less than 1500 mg of salt per day), low in saturated fats, and low in cholesterol are beneficial for patients diagnosed with hypertension. If you have been hypertensive, you may consider the DASH

(Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet to help you make healthy food choices.

The blood pressure can easily be checked by monitoring during your routine office visit or periodic health examination. Once you are diagnosed with hypertension, then regular monitoring can be done at home using a blood pressure cuff, and/or in your doctor's office.

While most cases of high blood pressure are diagnosed in people over the age of 40, a small percentage may have high blood pressure starting at a much younger age including adolescents and young adults. If you have not had your blood pressure checked in the past three years, have a family history of hypertension, or have a diagnosis of hypertension that is not being monitored, please make an appointment to have a blood pressure checked.

Going Online

Due to rising production and mailing costs, this health letter will no longer be available through the mail. This edition and all future issues of the health letter will be available online using the following link- www.myahphysicians.org/roth. If you do not have access to a computer, you can still pick up copies of this and future health letters by stopping by our office during your regular office visit.

Flu vaccine

The flu vaccine is now available for our patients and is indicated for all people starting at the age of six months and up. This vaccine is generally very well tolerated with minimal side effects- occasional sore arms and low grade fevers have been reported. The vaccine should not be given to those with a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome (a neuromuscular condition which can cause paralysis) or any prior history of allergy or sensitivity to the vaccine. For people who have a history of allergies to chicken eggs, a special flu vaccine is available. The vaccine can be obtained during your regularly scheduled office visits or during our flu vaccine clinic hours- listed below by appointment.

OFFICE HOURS	M	T	W	Th	F	
Morning hours	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	
PM hours	1-8	1-6	1-5	1-7	1-4	

Dr. Roth phone 215-357-5780
Flu vaccine hours by appt-
Mon 11:00 AM-12:30 PM
Tues 4:30- 6:00 PM
Thurs 1:00- 3:00 PM