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from Judee,
Our Parish Nurse ♥

High Blood Pressure continued:

What Causes High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure tends to rise with age, unless you take steps to prevent or control it.

Certain medical problems, such as chronic kidney disease, thyroid disease, and sleep apnea, may cause blood pressure to rise. Certain medicines, such as asthma medicines (for example, corticosteroids) and cold-relief products, also may raise blood pressure.

In some women, blood pressure can go up if they use birth control pills, become pregnant, or take hormone replacement therapy.

Women taking birth control pills usually have a small rise in both systolic and diastolic blood pressures. If you already have high blood pressure (HBP) and want to use birth control pills, make sure your doctor knows about your HBP. Talk to him or her about how often you should have your blood pressure checked and how to control it while taking the pill.

Taking hormones to reduce the symptoms of menopause can cause a small rise in systolic blood pressure. If you already have HBP and want to start using hormones, talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits. If you decide to take hormones, find out how to control your blood pressure and how often you should have it checked.

Children younger than 10 years who have HBP often have another condition that's causing it (such as kidney disease). Treating the underlying condition may resolve the HBP.

The older a child is when HBP is diagnosed, the more likely he or she is to have essential hypertension. This means that doctors don't know what's causing the HBP.

Who Is At Risk for High Blood Pressure?

In the United States, about 72 million people have high blood pressure (HBP). This is about 1 in 3 adults.

Certain traits, conditions, or habits are known to raise the risk for HBP. These conditions are called risk factors. This section describes the major risk factors for HBP.

Older Age

Blood pressure tends to rise with age. If you're a male older than 45 or a female older than 55, your risk for HBP is higher. Over half of all Americans aged 60 and older have HBP.

Isolated systolic hypertension (ISH) is the most common form of HBP in older adults. ISH occurs when only systolic blood pressure (the top number) is high. About 2 out of 3 people over age 60 who have HBP have ISH.

HBP doesn't have to be a routine part of aging. You can take steps keep your blood pressure at a normal level.

Race/Ethnicity

HBP can affect anyone. However, it occurs more often in African American adults than in Caucasian or Hispanic American adults. In relation to these groups, African Americans:

