

- h. Avoid sugary and starchy foods such as cakes, ice cream, sweets and biscuits.
- I. Also avoid eating meat with a lot of fat on it.

**Limit your intake of** - rice, kenkey, gari, yam, plantain, cassava, fufu and banku.

**Eat plenty of** - fruits and vegetables such as oranges, pineapples, mangoes, guava, lettuce, greens, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes etc.

- 2. **If you smoke - stop**
- 3. **If you drink alcohol - stop**
- 4. **If your life is full of stress**, determine what things you can change to make it less stressful. Are you someone who always works and never rests or does anything to relax?? If so, change that.
- 5. **Start an exercise program** - Walking is the safest and cheapest exercise. You can start by walking 10 minutes a day 3 days a week. Work up to 30-45 minutes 3 or 4 days a week.
- 6. **Medication** ---- If your blood pressure is dangerously high, the doctor will probably tell you to do the above things as well as put you on blood pressure medicine. **Be sure to take your medicine as the doctor tells you.**

If your blood pressure is just a little high, the doctor will probably tell you to try diet, exercise etc. for a month or two to see if this will bring your blood pressure down.

**Remember** - If high blood pressure is detected early, managed and treated properly, then you can live a full life. Treatment must continue throughout your lifetime. You cannot be cured of high blood pressure, but with proper management and treatment, it can be controlled.

***You can avoid the silent killer!***

**Share this tract with someone you love**

This material was compiled by Connie Sheffler from information found in the booklet *Blood Pressure, Hypertension and Hypotension* by Beatrice Bediako, health article by Dr. Paul Acheampong of the Hypertension Clinic at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, health article quoting Dr. Nii Laryea Browne of the Department of Community Health, School of Medical Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and health article *Taking Control of High Blood Pressure* Dec. 2003 Saturday Evening Post

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# **The Silent Killer High Blood Pressure**

**ONE OUT OF EVERY THREE** people in Ghana have high blood pressure (hypertension). Many people are walking around with high blood pressure and do not know it. Untreated high blood pressure can lead to diseases that cause death. Fight this silent killer by being informed.

## **WHAT IS BLOOD PRESSURE?**

It is a measurement of the pressure exerted by the blood on the wall of the blood vessels when blood is pumped by the heart. Blood pressure measurement is made of two numbers. Such as 120 over 80.

The first number is called the systolic pressure. It is a measurement of the pressure when blood is being pumped.

The second number is called the diastolic pressure. It is a measurement of the pressure when the heart has a very, very short resting period between pumps.

Your heart normally pumps (or beats) 60-80 times a minutes. This number is also called your pulse.

## **WHAT IS A NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE?**

Normal blood pressure can vary with individuals and age. We consider normal (systolic) or first number pressure to be below 140 and the (diastolic) or second number pressure to be below 90. If you