



WORLD HEALTH DAY 2013

Control your blood pressure... Control your life

Basic facts about high blood **PRESSURE**

1. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is defined as a systolic blood pressure equal to or above 140 mm Hg and/or diastolic blood pressure equal to or above 90 mm Hg.
2. High blood pressure is very common. Two out of five adults in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are affected by high blood pressure.
3. High blood pressure is increasing in the Eastern Mediterranean Region due to changes in lifestyle associated with urbanization and socio-demographic changes.
4. Behavioural and lifestyle-related factors can put people at a higher risk for developing high blood pressure. These factors include eating too much salt (sodium), being overweight and not getting enough exercise, as well as drinking too much alcohol and using tobacco.
5. Normal levels of both systolic and diastolic blood pressure are particularly important for the efficient function of vital organs such as the heart, brain and kidney and for overall health and well-being.
6. High blood pressure, if left uncontrolled, can lead to heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney failure and blindness.
7. High blood pressure has no symptoms in most people. It is a **"silent killer"**. When symptoms do occur, the most common are headache, shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, palpitations of the heart and nose bleeds.
8. High blood pressure can affect anyone. Many people are unaware that they have hypertension and are undiagnosed. That is why it is important for everyone to get their blood pressure checked regularly.
9. Early detection and management of high blood pressure minimizes the risk of heart attacks. All adults should know their blood pressure levels.
10. Management of hypertension is easy. People who already have high blood pressure can actively participate in managing their condition. They need to:
 - ✓ Adopt healthy behaviours
 - ✓ Monitor blood pressure regularly, at home if feasible
 - ✓ Check their blood sugar, blood cholesterol and urine albumin
 - ✓ Take their prescribed medicine regularly
 - ✓ Follow medical advice.