

Discharge Instructions for Malignant Hypertension

You have been diagnosed with malignant hypertension. This means you have very high blood pressure (a top number higher than 220 or a bottom number higher than 120). This elevated blood pressure could result in damage to your heart, kidneys, and other organs. Here's what you can do to help manage this condition.

Taking Your Blood Pressure

- Learn to take your own blood pressure.
- Keep a record of your blood pressure results. Ask your doctor which readings mean that you need medical attention.
- Have your blood pressure checked by your healthcare provider regularly.

Taking Medications

- Take your blood pressure medication exactly as your doctor directed.
- Learn the possible side effects of any prescribed medications.
- Tell your doctor about any medications you are taking. Some medications can cause malignant hypertension.
- Avoid medications that contain heart stimulants, including over-the-counter drugs. Check for warnings about hypertension on the label.
- Check with your doctor before taking a decongestant. Some can worsen hypertension.

Lifestyle Changes

- Limit your activity until your blood pressure is controlled.
- Cut back on salt.
 - Limit canned, dried, packaged, and fast foods.
 - Don't add salt to your food at the table.
 - Season foods with herbs instead of salt when you cook.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Get help to lose any extra pounds.
- Begin an exercise program. Ask your doctor how to get started. You can benefit from simple activities like walking or gardening.

- Don't drink more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day.
- Limit drinks that contain caffeine (coffee, black or green tea, cola) to 2 per day.
- Never take stimulants such as amphetamines or cocaine; these drugs can be deadly for someone with hypertension.
- Control your stress. Learn stress-management techniques.

Follow-Up

- Make a follow-up appointment with your doctor promptly.
- Visit your doctor for blood pressure checks, dietary advice, and medication adjustment.

When to Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- Moderate to severe headache
- Weakness in the muscles of your face, arms, or legs
- Trouble speaking
- Extreme drowsiness or confusion
- Fainting or dizziness
- Pulsating or rushing sound in your ears
- Unexplained nosebleed
- Weakness, tingling, or numbness of your face, arms, or legs
- Change in vision