Pay Attention!
to Blood Pressure and Hypertension

Known as the “silent killer,” **high blood pressure** or **hypertension** affects 25 percent of all Americans, both male and female. Although the cause is unknown, if left uncontrolled, **high blood pressure** can result in **heart attack**, kidney disease and **stroke**. Since it is so prevalent and few noticeable symptoms accompany it, it seems that people do not take the prevention and treatment of **high blood pressure** seriously—a mistake that could prove fatal.

If detected early and treated effectively with lifestyle change and medication, blood pressure can be lowered and cause no health problems.

− **Normal blood pressure is around 120/80 mmHg.**
− **If either number is higher than 140/90, it is considered high blood pressure.**

Dealing with elevated blood pressure for a long amount of time puts a severe strain on the heart and the cardiovascular system as a whole. Chronic high blood pressure may lead to more severe conditions such as:

− **Atherosclerosis** - the buildup of fatty plaque that clogs arteries and leads to heart disease, heart attack and stroke.
− **Silent heart attack** - an attack that occurs without tangible symptoms such as chest pain, particularly prevalent among persons with high blood pressure.
− **Congestive heart failure** - a condition where the heart is unable to adequately pump blood to the body.

To control and prevent **high blood pressure**, recommendations include:

− **Do not smoke.**
− **Eat a healthy diet:** Meals should be rich in fiber, fruits and vegetables, with low salt, sodium, saturated fat and cholesterol.
− **Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight:** If overweight or obese, use a physician-recommended plan to lose excess weight. Physical activity strengthens the muscles throughout the body, including the muscles in the heart.
− **Consult a physician about medication:** If diagnosed with high blood pressure, there are medications available that may help control the condition.
− **Do not ignore high blood pressure:** This is a serious condition that can lead to heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Consult a physician about recommendations for controlling blood pressure, and know the facts about heart attack and stroke.
− **Limit alcohol consumption:** Drink in moderation: one drink per day for women, two drinks per day for men.