

## **9. Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) & Kidney Disease**

### **9.1. What is High Blood Pressure?**

As blood flows through your veins, it presses against the walls of your blood vessels. When this “pressure” is more than it should be, it is known as high blood pressure, or hypertension. Extra fluid in your body increases the volume of fluid in your blood and makes your blood pressure higher. Narrow or clogged blood vessels can also raise blood pressure.

The only way to know if your blood pressure is high is to have it taken by a trained professional. After the test, you will be given two numbers that represent the pressure when your heart is beating and when it is resting between beats. A person's blood pressure is considered high if it goes above 139/89 (usually said “139 over 89”). But levels of 120/80 are now considered “pre-hypertensive” and should be monitored closely.

### **9.2. What are the symptoms of High Blood Pressure?**

Unfortunately, most people with high blood pressure do not have any symptoms. The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked.

### **9.3. How does High Blood Pressure affect my kidneys?**

High blood pressure can damage your kidneys. It is the second leading cause of kidney failure. Your kidneys play a role in keeping your blood pressure at the right level. Because of this, some people who already have kidney disease can also get high blood pressure.

High blood pressure makes the heart work harder and can damage blood vessels in the body. If the blood vessels in the kidneys are damaged, they may stop doing their job of removing wastes and extra fluids from the blood. The extra fluids may then raise blood pressure even more.

### **9.4. What is the relationship between Blood Pressure and Kidney Disease?**

Blood pressure and kidney disease go together in two ways. First, high blood pressure is the second commonest cause of kidney failure and contributes to kidney failure in diabetes and other forms of kidney disease. At the same time, kidney disease causes high blood pressure. If you get kidney disease and then get high blood pressure from it, that high blood pressure will cause further damage to your kidneys.

### **9.5. What can I do to control High Blood Pressure?**

- Check your blood pressure often.
- Take your medicine.
- Exercise regularly.
- Quit smoking.
- Ask your doctor if taking a water pill (diuretic) would be right for you.

### **9.6. What can I do if I already have Kidney Disease?**

- Your blood pressure should be 130/80 or lower.
- Discuss a target blood pressure reading with your doctor.
- Ask your doctor if an ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibitor or ARB (angiotensin receptor blockers) would be right for you. These medicines can help slow your kidney disease and control your blood pressure