



17 May 2026 is World **HYPERTENSION DAY**

WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, happens when the force of blood against your artery walls is consistently too high and your heart must work harder to pump blood. It often has no symptoms, which is why it's known as the "silent killer". The good news is that high blood pressure can be detected early and managed effectively.

If left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to serious health problems, including:



Heart disease and heart attacks



Stroke



Kidney damage



Vision loss

WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone can develop hypertension, but your risk is higher if you:



Are overweight or inactive



Eat a diet high in salt or processed foods



Smoke or drink alcohol regularly



Have a family history of high blood pressure



Are over the age of 40

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Many people with hypertension may not experience any symptoms. However, the symptoms below could indicate that your blood pressure is dangerously high, and you should consult a doctor immediately:



Severe headache & getting worse



Chest pain



Difficulty breathing



Drowsiness and confusion



Sudden onset of vision problems

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

A normal blood pressure reading is around **120/80 mmHg**.

If your reading is consistently **140/90 mmHg or higher**, it may indicate hypertension. The only way to know is to check your blood pressure regularly.



Manage and prevent hypertension with some lifestyle changes:

- Eat less salt and more fresh, whole foods.
- Exercise regularly (even brisk walking helps).
- Maintain a healthy weight - the Scheme's Weight Management Programme is a personalised, exercise-based programme that provides professional support through your weight-loss journey. Call 0860 106 155 for more information or read more on page 29 of the Member Guide.
- Limit your alcohol intake.
- Keep your stress levels in check.
- Stop smoking - all members can access the GoSmokeFree smoking cessation programme, which is available from these preferred providers - Dis-Chem, Clicks, Pick n Pay and independent pharmacies throughout South Africa. Read more [here](#).

HOW CAN AECI MEDICAL AID SOCIETY HELP ME?

Have your blood pressure tested as part of your annual Health Risk Assessment*. Hypertension can be successfully managed with lifestyle changes and, if diagnosed as a chronic condition, with medication. Hypertension is one of the Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMB), which means that the cost of treating it is covered by the Scheme's Chronic Medicine Management Programme.

*The HRA can be done by an SA Nursing Council-registered nurse at any pharmacy clinic or at a corporate wellness day.

Being informed is the first step to better health.
Hypertension can be effectively managed and treated – but only if it is detected early.



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or scan the QR Code to visit the AECI MAS Member Portal | ➡ aecimedicalaidsociety.co.za