



# Calderdale and Huddersfield

## NHS Foundation Trust

### Patient Information Leaflet

#### SDEC Patient Information – Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)

##### Diagnosis: Hypertension

Following your visit to the Same Day Emergency Centre (SDEC), you have been diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure). This is a common condition where the pressure of blood in your arteries is consistently too high.

##### What is Hypertension?

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries.

It is measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg) and recorded as:

- Systolic pressure (when the heart pumps)
- Diastolic pressure (when the heart relaxes)

Hypertension is usually defined as:

- Clinic BP  $\geq 140/90$  mmHg
- Home or ambulatory BP  $\geq 135/85$  mmHg

Most people do not have symptoms, which is why it is often called a “silent condition”.

##### What Causes Hypertension?

In most cases (primary hypertension), there is no single identifiable cause.

It is thought to be related to:

- Narrowing or stiffening of arteries
- Hormonal and kidney regulation changes

Sometimes (secondary hypertension), it can be caused by:

- Kidney disease
- Hormonal disorders
- Certain medications (e.g. steroids, contraceptive pill)

##### Risk Factors – Who is More Likely to Have Hypertension?

You are more at risk if you:

- Are over 40 years old
- Have a family history of hypertension
- Are overweight or obese
- Eat a high-salt diet
- Drink excessive alcohol
- Smoke
- Have diabetes or kidney disease
- Are of Black African or Caribbean background

## What Tests or Investigations Are Needed?

Diagnosis usually requires repeated measurements.

Tests may include:

- Clinic blood pressure readings
- Home or 24-hour ambulatory BP monitoring
- Blood tests (kidney function, cholesterol, glucose)
- Urine test (protein)
- ECG (heart tracing)

These help assess for complications and underlying causes.

## What Are the Treatment Options for Hypertension?

Treatment aims to reduce blood pressure and lower the risk of complications such as heart attack and stroke.

### 1. Lifestyle Measures (First-Line for All Patients)

- Reduce salt intake (<6g per day)
- Eat a healthy balanced diet (e.g. DASH-style diet)
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly (≥150 minutes/week)
- Limit alcohol (≤14 units/week)
- Stop smoking
- Reduce caffeine intake

### 2. Medication

Medications are often required if BP remains high.

Common types include:

- ACE inhibitors (e.g. Ramipril)
  - Benefit: protects heart and kidneys
  - Risk: dry cough, dizziness
- Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs)
  - Alternative if ACE inhibitors not tolerated
- Calcium channel blockers (e.g. Amlodipine)
  - Benefit: relaxes blood vessels
  - Risk: ankle swelling
- Diuretics (e.g. Indapamide)
  - Benefit: reduces fluid volume
  - Risk: electrolyte imbalance

Treatment is usually long-term or lifelong.

## What Are the Target Blood Pressure Levels?

- Adults under 80: <140/90 mmHg (clinic)
- Home readings: <135/85 mmHg
- In some patients (e.g. diabetes): lower targets may be advised

## What Complications Should I Be Aware Of?

If untreated, hypertension can lead to:

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Heart failure
- Kidney disease
- Vision problems (hypertensive retinopathy)
- Peripheral vascular disease

## What Is the Outlook (Prognosis)?

- Hypertension is usually a long-term condition
- Many people live normal lives with treatment
- Good control significantly reduces risk of complications

## When Should I Seek Help Urgently?

Call 999 or attend A&E immediately if you have:

- Severe chest pain
- Sudden weakness or speech difficulty (possible stroke)
- Severe headache with confusion or vision problems
- Very high BP with symptoms (possible hypertensive emergency)

**DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF TO A&E**

## Who Should I Contact for Other Concerns?

Contact SDEC if you:

- Have very high readings or symptoms
- Are unsure about medication

Contact your GP if you:

- Need medication review
- Have side effects
- Have persistently high readings

If GP is closed, call NHS 111

## Contact information

If you have concerns after leaving SDEC, please contact:

SDEC / Hospital Advice Line: \_\_\_\_\_

GP: \_\_\_\_\_

Out of hours: NHS 111

In an emergency, call 999.