Last November, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association released new hypertension guidelines. They included changes to related definitions. The new guidelines also highlighted new thresholds for starting medications for hypertension and more aggressive treatment targets. Dr. Sufia Syed, Doctors Community Practices at Laurel, provides a brief overview of some of these changes.

First, let’s cover a few basic definitions provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Hypertension** — Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries, which carry blood from your heart to other body parts. Blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day. But if it stays high for a long time, it can damage your heart and lead to health problems. Also known as high blood pressure or the “silent killer,” it has no warning signs or symptoms.

- **Systolic blood pressure** — It measures the pressure in your blood vessels when your heart beats.

- **Diastolic blood pressure** — It measures the pressure in your blood when your heart rests between beats.

The new guidelines have resulted in an estimated 30 million more people being categorized as having hypertension. In addition to helping people identify this health issue early and make important lifestyle changes to minimize the risk of long-term cardiovascular conditions, the new system places a new emphasis on blood pressure measurement. It includes a consideration of other measurements that can be taken at home, grocery stores, health fairs, etc.

Also, the new guidelines:

- Eliminated the “pre-hypertensive” category
- Introduced an “elevated” blood pressure category, which starts at 120/80
- Established a stage 1 measurement, which now starts at 130/80
- Lowers targets for blood pressure control
- Emphasizes lifestyle management in the early stages

**Hypertension Improvement Strategies**

**Lose Weight and Monitor What You Eat**

- Try following a DASH or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet, which encourages the eating of foods that have reduced sodium and increased nutrients

**Increase Your Physical Activity**

- Try to exercise for at least 30 minutes a day
- Consider walking, Zumba and other fun activities as part of your exercise plan

**Limit Your Use of Alcohol**

- Limit your intake of alcohol to two drinks or less a day for men
- Limit your intake of alcohol to one drink or less a day for women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The New Blood Pressure Measurements¹</th>
<th>SYSTOLIC</th>
<th>DIASTOLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal: Less than 120/80 mmHg</td>
<td>&lt;120 mmHg</td>
<td>&lt;80 mmHg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevated: Systolic between 120-129 and diastolic less than 80</td>
<td>120 - 129 mmHg</td>
<td>&lt;80 mmHg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Systolic between 130-139 or diastolic between 80-89</td>
<td>130 - 139 mmHg</td>
<td>80 - 89 mmHg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Systolic at least 140 or diastolic at least 90 mmHg</td>
<td>≥140 mmHg</td>
<td>≥90 mmHg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertensive Crisis: Systolic of 180+ and/or diastolic 120+ with patients needing prompt changes in medication. It applies when there are no other indications of problems or need for immediate hospitalization if there are signs of organ damage²</td>
<td>180+ mmHg</td>
<td>≥120+ mmHg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Heart Association News

¹ Consult your physician for individual recommendations.
² Hypertension Crisis information clarified by Dr. Sufia Syed.
Your body is a complex system. Each part has an important role in supporting your well-being. The same is true at Doctors Community Health System. Our network of care can help you maintain and improve your overall health. So, let our system care for yours.

At the heart of this system is our flagship – Doctors Community Hospital in Lanham, Maryland. For your convenience, we complement the hospital’s medical and surgical programs with more than a dozen centers of care located throughout the area:

- Ambulatory Surgery
- Bariatric and Weight Loss Program
- Breast Health
- Digestive Care
- Emergency Services
- Endocrinology and Diabetes Care
- Imaging Services
- Infusion Care
- Orthopedic Service
- Primary Care
- Radiation Oncology
- Rehabilitation Program
- Sleep Care
- Surgical Services
- Wellness Center
- Wound Care

Contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment.
301-DCH-4YOU | 301-324-4968 | DCHweb.org

STAY CONNECTED!

Doctors Community Hospital  DCHweb  DCH4YOU

Main Campus
8118 Good Luck Road
Lanham, Maryland 20706