

# Heart Disease and Stroke Facts: Heart Attack and Stroke and High Blood Pressure in Alaska

## What is Hypertension?

Normal blood pressure is defined as a pressure reading less than 120 mm Hg when the heart contracts (systolic) and a pressure reading less than 80 mm Hg when the heart relaxes (diastolic). Hypertension occurs as blood pressure readings exceed these numbers<sup>1</sup>:

Category	Systolic	Diastolic
Pre-Hypertension	120 – 139	80 - 89
Stage 1 Hypertension	140-159	90-99
Stage 2 Hypertensions	>160	>100

## Why is Hypertension a Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease?

- For every 20 mm Hg increase in systolic blood pressure, and 10 mm Hg increase in diastolic blood pressure, the risk of dying from heart disease or stroke doubles.<sup>1</sup>
- High blood pressure speeds up formation of plaque on the artery walls.<sup>2</sup>
- High blood pressure enlarges the heart and increases the heart's oxygen demand.<sup>2</sup>
- Approximately 28% of new heart disease cases in men and women are attributable to high blood pressure.<sup>3</sup>
- The incidence of stroke increases proportionally to both systolic and diastolic blood pressure.<sup>3</sup>
- Often there are no symptoms associated with hypertension so the condition is not treated.<sup>2</sup>

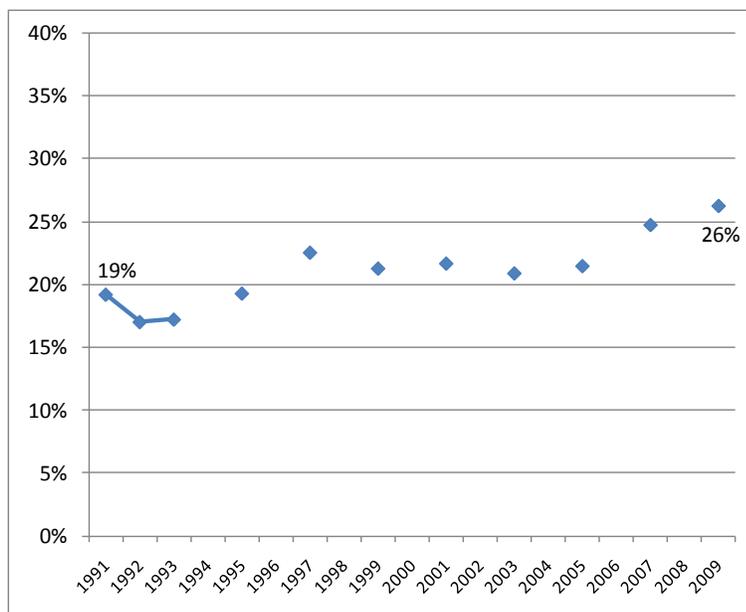
## Don't be Caught Unaware

Nearly one in three Americans have high blood pressure.<sup>4</sup> Of those, about 30% are unaware they have it. So get your blood pressure checked at least every two years. If your blood pressure is greater than 120 / 80, then get it checked at least yearly. And, if you have high blood pressure, follow your health care provider's orders to control it.



## Hypertension in Alaska?

- The percentage of adults who have been told they have high blood pressure has gradually increased since 1991<sup>5</sup>



- Men report having been told they have high blood pressure at a higher rate than women<sup>5</sup>
  - For Alaskans 65 years and older, more women than men report hypertension<sup>5</sup>
  - There are no significant racial discrepancies in reported hypertension rates<sup>5</sup>
  - Hypertension prevalence generally decreases with increased income<sup>5</sup>

## What Can You Do?

Initial steps to control blood pressure can be done by anyone and are part of a healthy lifestyle anyway. You can:

- Lose weight
- Eat a low sodium diet
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and low or non-fat dairy
- Increase physical activity
- Moderate alcohol consumption

<sup>1</sup>Chobanian AV, Bakris GL, Black HR, et al. The Seventh Report of the National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure: the JNC 7 report. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure; National High Blood Pressure Education Program Coordinating Committee. *JAMA* 2003;289(19):2560-72. Erratum in: *JAMA* 2003 Jul9;290(2):197; <sup>2</sup>The Burden of Heart Disease and Stroke in Alaska: Mortality, Morbidity, and Risk Factors, available at: [http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/chp/pubs/burden\\_Dec09.pdf](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/chp/pubs/burden_Dec09.pdf); <sup>3</sup>Wilson PWF, D'Agostino RB, Levy D, et al. Prediction of coronary heart disease using risk factor categories. *Circulation* 1998;97:1837-1847; <sup>4</sup>Fields LE, Burt VL, Cutler JA, et al. The burden of adult hypertension in the United States 1999 to 2000: a rising tide. *Hypertension* 2004;44:398-404 <sup>5</sup>Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

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