

Hypertension: the silent killer

1. **TALK:** What do you know about hypertension? Why do you think it is called 'the silent killer'?

2. **VOCABULARY:** Complete each sentence using a word from the box.

perpetuate	exacerbate	asymptomatic	dizziness	rash
stroke	awareness	side-effects	compliance	

1. A _____ is a skin irritation.
2. A _____ can be caused by a blocked artery in the brain
3. _____ means to cause something to continue.
4. _____ is when you feel that your head is spinning around.
5. Some drugs or treatments have unpleasant _____ - _____
6. _____ means to make something that is already bad, worse.
7. When a disease or condition has no symptoms, it is _____.
8. _____ means knowledge of a situation or a fact.
9. Non - _____ means the patient is not following their health provider's advice or treatment plan

3. **Reading:** Read the following text and answer the **True or False** questions that follow.

1) Hypertension, or high-blood pressure, affects more than four in ten adults worldwide. It is projected to affect more than 1.5 billion people around the world by 2025. When untreated or incorrectly treated, the condition can perpetuate and exacerbate cardiovascular and kidney problems, potentially leading to a 'treatment-resistant state'¹ and is thought to contribute to half of all heart attack and stroke deaths worldwide.²

2) Hypertension is generally asymptomatic, though sometimes patients can experience headaches, shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, heart palpitations and nose bleeds. Health awareness campaigns, better diagnosis and the availability of low-cost medication has resulted in a drop in the number of cases in wealthier countries though in middle- and lower-income countries where detection rates are lower, people are less aware of both the condition and the lifestyle changes that can control it and where treatment options are less accessible, hypertension remains a serious threat to health.

3) In spite of the reduced prevalence of the condition in high-income countries, it is still a serious condition. Accurate detection and management remains a priority and it is vital that patients who have been diagnosed are regularly monitored by their health provider.

4) Not all patients require a prescription drug. Those that do may experience side effects such as a dry cough, dizziness, a rash and headaches which can be unpleasant and lead to non-compliance. In addition, medication that is not correctly titrated can cause dizziness, falls and fractures which can seriously affect the patient's quality of life.

True or False?

- a) High-blood pressure can make some existing health conditions worse
- b) Some people may have no symptoms of high-blood pressure
- c) The number of people suffering from hypertension is rising all over the world
- d) Medication is the only solution when a patient is diagnosed with the condition
- e) It is very important that people see their doctor frequently when they are diagnosed with hypertension
- e) Getting the medication dosage right is very important in order to avoid adverse affects

¹ National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Hypertension: clinical management of primary hypertension in adults. London: NICE. CG127

² World health Organization. (2013). Q&As on hypertension. Online Q&A, March 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/features/qa/82/en/>

4. The following image shows the risk factors for hypertension. With a partner, complete the missing risk factors. What do you know about these risk factors?



5a. VIDEO³: What do you think White Coat Syndrome is? Is it serious? Watch the video and see if you're right.

5b. Now watch the video again and select the correct answer to the following questions.

- White coat syndrome affects up to _____ of the population in the US.
 - 20%
 - 30%
 - 40%
 - 13%
- Some of the symptoms of White Coat Syndrome include rapid heartbeat, constricted blood vessels, dilated pupils and...
 - dizziness
 - nausea
 - sweaty hands
 - nausea
- Masked hypertension is when blood pressure is...
 - difficult to detect
 - high at work
 - high in the doctor's office
 - both a & c
- Patients with White Coat Syndrome or Masked Hypertension have a risk of hypertension that is...
 - lower
 - negligible
 - a little higher
 - significantly higher
- Monitoring blood pressure at home is often recommended for patients...
 - whose BP⁴ readings fluctuate
 - with high BP
 - too busy to see their doctor
 - too ill to see their doctor

³ <https://www.healthination.com/health/white-coat-hypertension>

⁴ BP = blood pressure

Hypertension: the silent killer

KEY

1. **Introduction:** What do you know about hypertension? Why do you think it is called ‘the silent killer’?

Called the silent killer because it is often **asymptomatic**

Teacher: point out that a number of other conditions can also be termed ‘silent killers’ as symptoms, particularly in the early stages, can pass unnoticed, e.g. coronary artery disease (CAD), diabetes, fatty liver disease; osteoporosis, colon cancer.

2. **Vocabulary:** Complete each sentence using a word from the box.

perpetuate	exacerbate	asymptomatic	dizziness	rash
stroke	awareness	side-effects	compliance	

1. A **rash** is a skin irritation.

2. A **stroke** can be caused by a blocked artery in the brain

3. **perpetuate** means to cause something to continue.

4. **dizziness** is when you feel that your head is spinning around.

5. Some drugs or treatments have unpleasant **side-effects**

6. **exacerbate** means to make something that is already bad worse.

7. When a disease or condition has no symptoms it is **asymptomatic**

8. **awareness** means knowledge of a situation or a fact.

9. Non - **compliance** means the patient is not following their health provider’s advice or treatment plan

3. **Reading:** Read the following text and answer the **True or False** questions that follow.

1) Hypertension, or high-blood pressure, affects more than four in ten adults worldwide. It is projected to affect more than 1.5 billion people around the world by 2025. When untreated or incorrectly treated, the condition can perpetuate and exacerbate cardiovascular and kidney problems, potentially leading to a 'treatment-resistant state'¹ and is thought to contribute to half of all heart attack and stroke deaths worldwide.²

2) Hypertension is generally asymptomatic, though sometimes patients can experience headaches, shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, heart palpitations and nose bleeds. Health awareness campaigns, better diagnosis and the availability of low-cost medication has resulted in a drop in the number of cases in wealthier countries though in middle- and lower-income countries where detection rates are lower, people are less aware of both the condition and the lifestyle changes that can control it and where treatment options are less accessible, hypertension remains a serious threat to health.

3) In spite of the reduced prevalence of the condition in high-income countries, it is still a serious condition. Accurate detection and management remains a priority and it is vital that patients who have been diagnosed are regularly monitored by their health provider.

4) Not all patients require a prescription drug. Those that do may experience side effects such as a dry cough, dizziness, a rash and headaches which can be unpleasant and lead to non-compliance. In addition, medication that is not correctly titrated can cause dizziness, falls and fractures which can seriously affect the patient's quality of life.

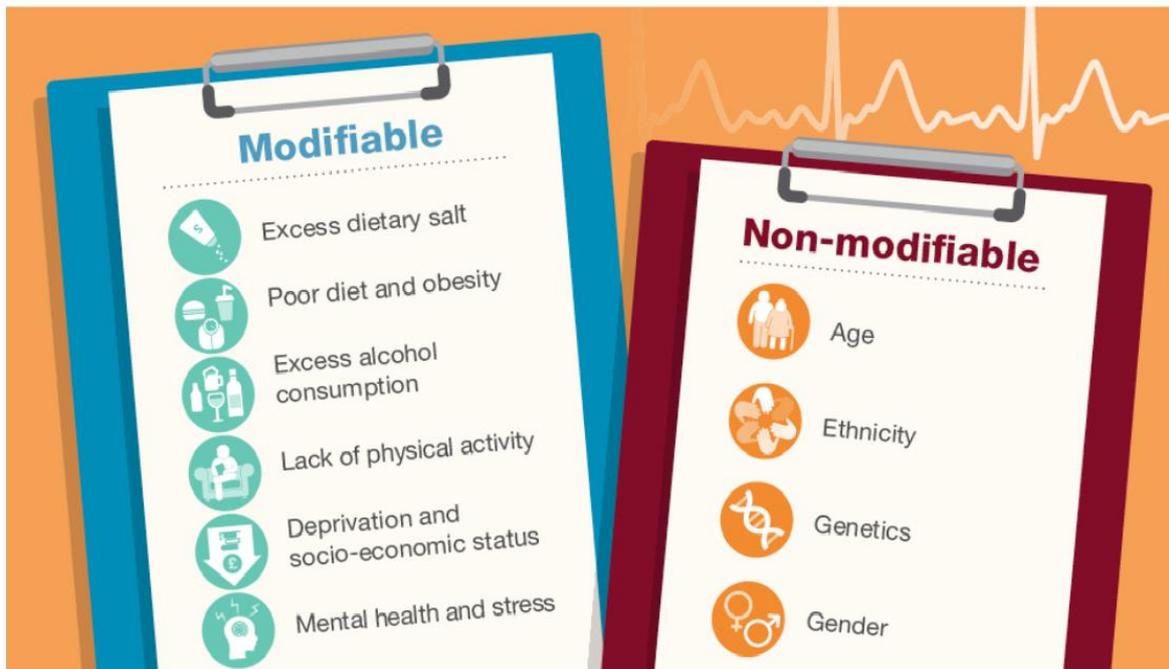
True or False?

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| a) High-blood pressure can make some existing health conditions worse | TRUE |
| b) Some people may have no symptoms of high-blood pressure | TRUE |
| c) The number of people suffering from hypertension is rising all over the world | FALSE |
| d) Medication is the only solution when a patient is diagnosed with the condition | FALSE |
| e) It's important that people see their doctor frequently when diagnosed with hypertension | TRUE |
| e) Getting the medication dosage right is very important in order to avoid adverse affects | TRUE |

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² World health Organization. (2013). Q&As on hypertension. Online Q&A, March 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/features/qa/82/en/>

4. The following image shows the risk factors for hypertension. With a partner, complete the missing risk factors. What can you say about these risk factors?



TEACHER: it is important that students are given enough time to consider the risk factors and their relationships to each other. E.g economically deprived people are likely to have poorer diets including more fast food (and thus salt) and to suffer more stress. Links can then be made between risk factors for developing the condition, for being diagnosed and for successful management of the condition.

This can be done in groups or as a class discussion.

5a. **VIDEO:** What do you think White Coat Syndrome is? How can it affect blood pressure readings? Is White Coat Syndrome serious? Watch the video and see if you're right.

When blood pressure rises because you are seeing a doctor or other health professional. This may be due to anxiety, genuine concerns about health or because you've been waiting too long in the waiting room (and now you're stressed).

It is serious because there is a link between White Coat Syndrome and hypertension later in life.

5b. Now watch the video again and select the correct answer to the following questions.

1. White coat syndrome affects up to _____ of the population in the US.

- a) 20% b) 30% c) 40% d) 13%

2. Some of the symptoms of White Coat Syndrome include rapid heartbeat, constricted blood vessels, dilated pupils and...

- a) dizziness b) nausea c) sweaty hands d) nausea

3. Masked hypertension is when blood pressure is

- a) high at home b) high at work c) high in the doctor's office d) both a & c

4. Patients with White Coat Syndrome or Masked Hypertension have a risk of hypertension that is

- a) lower b) negligible c) a little higher d) significantly higher

5. Monitoring blood pressure at home is often recommended for patients

- a) whose BP³ readings fluctuate b) with low BP c) too busy to see their doctor d) too ill to see their doctor

Finish the lesson with a review of lexical items.

During the review, encourage students to share their opinions/thoughts about the topic, as well as personal experience of the topic. Encourage them to say what they have learned and what they will take away from the lesson.

³ BP = blood pressure