# Medical Management of Adults with Hypertension

## Eligible Population

<table>
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<th>Adult patients ≥ 18 years of age. Not pregnant.</th>
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## Key Components

### Initial assessment

- The objectives of the initial evaluation are to assess lifestyle, cardiovascular risk factors, concomitant disorders, reveal identifiable causes of hypertension and check for target organ damage and cardiovascular disease.
- Physical examination: 2 or more BP measurements on initial visit plus one or more follow-up visits using regularly calibrated equipment with the appropriate sized cuff and separated by at least 2 minutes with the patient seated and standing, verification in contralateral arm, funduscopic exam, neck exam (bruits), heart and lung exam, abdominal exam for bruits or aortic aneurysm, extreme pulses and neurological assessment [D].

### Goals of Therapy

- If no other risk factors (and < 60 years of age): target BP <140/90 [A]. If no other risk factors and ≥ 60 years: target BP <150/90 [B].
- Patients with risk factors, including diabetes, ASCVD, CKD: target BP < 130/80 [B].
- Caution: low diastolic or orthostatic symptoms may limit ability to control systolic. Use extreme caution if diastolic is below 70.
- Goal: <130/80 mm Hg if at risk (ASCVD, CKD, diabetes) and ambulatory.
- <140/90 mm Hg if no risk factors.

### Pharmacologic interventions

- Hypertension, Stage 1 based on systolic and/or diastolic (130/80-139/89): start with thiazide-type diuretic, ACE-I, ARB, DHP-CCB for almost all patients [A].
- Hypertension, Stage 2 (≥140/90): consider two-drug combination (thiazide plus ACE-I or DHP-CCB).
- In general, diuretics and DHP-CCB appear to be more effective as an initial treatment in African-Americans. ACE-I or ARB recommended in patients with diabetes, CKD, or heart failure. [A]
- Beta-blockers are recommended in patients with ischemic heart disease or heart failure.
- Intensify treatment until treatment goals are met; 3 or more drugs may be necessary for some patients to achieve goal BP. Multi-drug regimen at moderate dose is preferable to maximum dose monotherapy. Add spironolactone for resistant hypertension.
- Avoid concurrent use of ACE-I and ARB.
- Caution: NSAIDs may complicate management of hypertension and worsen renal function.

### Monitoring and adjustment of therapy

- Hypertension, Stage 1: initiate therapy and recheck within two months until goal is reached.
- Hypertension, Stage 2: initiate therapy and recheck weekly or more often if indicated. Symptomatic Stage 2 may require hospital monitoring and treatment.
- Recheck at each visit. If elevated, measure BP seated 5-10 minutes, feet flat, arm at rest, appropriate size cuff.
- Check serum potassium and creatinine at least annually for patients on diuretics/ACE-I/ARB.

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2 Moderate alcohol consumption is generally defined as up to two drinks per day for men, one drink per day for women.
3 ACE-I = angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor, ARB = angiotensin receptor blocker, DHP-CCB = long-acting dihydropyridine calcium channel blocker (e.g. amlodipine, felodipine)

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**Levels of Evidence for the most significant recommendations:**

- A = randomized controlled trials
- B = controlled trials, no randomization
- C = observational studies
- D = opinion of expert panel

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Approved by MQIC Medical Directors August 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018

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