

## **Hypertension: The Silent Killer**

Hypertension (*High Blood Pressure*) is a disease in which the blood pressure is elevated most all the time, day and night, during rest and activity, eating and sleeping, work and play. Hypertension is also a major risk factor for other diseases; if left untreated, it leads to damage of the heart, kidneys, brain, and blood vessels.

Over sixty million people have hypertension, which effects persons of all ages, both sexes, and all ethnic backgrounds.

The medical community classifies hypertension into two types: *primary* (over 90% of people have this form) and *secondary*, which means that blood pressure is elevated due to the presence of another disease.

Because the blood in our bodies flows in a closed system, when the pressure in the system elevates, it can cause damage to the system and all the organs and vessels in the system. A simple test to measure this pressure can provide vital information about how well the body is working and if there is problem.

A health care professional can measure your blood pressure and give you a number, 140/90 mm/hg This number represents the pressure in your arteries in millimeters of mercury. The top number is your *Systolic* pressure (pressure during contraction) and the bottom number is your *Diastolic* pressure (pressure during the relaxation of the heart muscle).

Both numbers are important and need to be evaluated by your doctor. As with any medical condition diagnosis is the key, checking your blood pressure is a simple, painless, potentially life saving procedure.

**GET SCREENED TODAY!** As a GuideStone medical plan participant, this test is covered at 100% under your Wellness benefit as a part of your annual physical.

GuideStone's Well Informed resources include tools to help you make healthy lifestyle changes and chronic condition support to help you live a healthier, longer life. For more information, go to [www.GuideStoneInsurance.org](http://www.GuideStoneInsurance.org) and choose the "Well informed" link.