HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)

• Having high blood pressure increases your risk of heart attack, stroke, and heart failure.

• What causes hypertension? There is no one specific cause, but all the following can contribute to it:
  o Age (men older than 55 and women older than 65)
  o Race
  o Family history of high blood pressure, heart disease, or stroke
  o Being overweight
  o Not exercising enough
  o Drinking too much alcohol
  o Using tobacco (smoking or chewing)
  o Eating an unhealthy diet that has too much salt or not enough potassium
  o Your doctor will also do tests to make sure there isn’t another medical problem (such as anemia) that is contributing to your high blood pressure.

• How is it treated? There is no cure, but high blood pressure can be controlled
  o Lifestyle changes
    ▪ Exercise regularly (activities that raise your heart rate and keep it up for at least 20-30 minutes)
    ▪ Switch to a healthy low-salt diet
    ▪ Lose weight if your doctor recommends it
    ▪ Quit smoking
  o Medication
    ▪ It may take more than one medicine to lower your blood pressure to a normal level
    ▪ It is important that you take your medicines every day as prescribed
      • If you skip your medication, your blood pressure will go back up.
      • It can be dangerous to suddenly stop your medicines
      • If you think you are experiencing side effects, call your doctor before stopping the medication, unless the symptoms are severe.
    ▪ BE SURE to take your medicines on the day of your follow-up appointment – if the medicine is not in your system, we cannot tell if it is working.