

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a risk factor for heart disease and stroke, which are leading causes of death in the United States (see *Heart Disease and Stroke*). It is defined as a systolic blood pressure (during heartbeats) of 140 mmHg or higher, a diastolic blood pressure (between heartbeats) of 90 mmHg or higher, or current use of blood pressure-lowering medication.

In 2009–2010, 27.5 percent of women were identified as having high blood pressure. This includes 15.6 percent of women with controlled hypertension, who had a normal blood pressure measurement and reported using blood pressure-lowering medication, and 11.9 percent with uncontrolled hypertension, who had a high blood

pressure measurement with or without the use of medication. Although men were similarly affected by hypertension overall (29.3 percent), they were more likely to have uncontrolled hypertension (14.9 percent; data not shown). In addition to medication, high blood pressure can also be controlled by losing excess body weight, participating in regular physical activity, adopting a healthy diet with lower sodium and higher potassium intake, avoiding tobacco smoke, and managing stress.²⁸

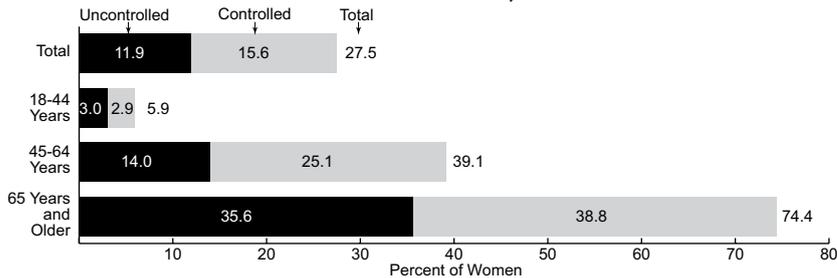
High blood pressure increases greatly with age, affecting only 5.9 percent of women aged 18–44 but rising to 39.1 percent among those aged 45–64 years and occurring among nearly three in four women aged 65 and older (74.4 percent).

Hypertension also varies by race and ethnicity. Over 40 percent of non-Hispanic Black women had hypertension in 2009–2010, compared to about 25 percent of non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women (data not shown).

It has been estimated that every 10 percent increase in hypertension treatment could prevent 14,000 deaths per year.²⁹ However, 44.8 percent of women identified as having uncontrolled hypertension in 2009–2010 reported that they had never received a diagnosis from a health care professional. More than half of younger women aged 18–44 years with uncontrolled hypertension were undiagnosed (56.6 percent) compared to 36.2 percent of those aged 45–64 years and 31.7 percent of those aged 65 years and older.

High Blood Pressure Among Women Aged 18 and Older,* by Age, 2009–2010

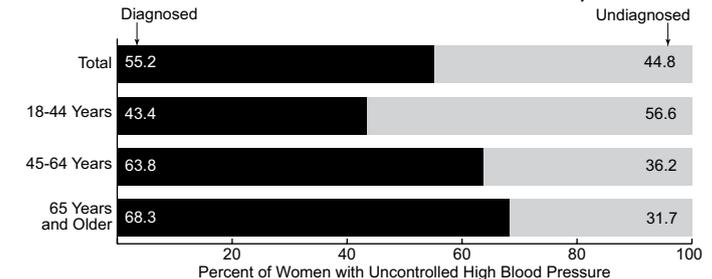
Source II.8: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



*Includes a measured systolic pressure (during heartbeats) of ≥ 140 mmHg or a diastolic blood pressure (between heartbeats) ≥ 90 mmHg (uncontrolled hypertension, with or without blood pressure-lowering medication) and normal blood pressure ($\leq 140/90$ mmHg) with reported current medication use (controlled hypertension); percentages may not add to totals due to rounding; total estimates are age-adjusted.

Diagnosis Status* Among Women Aged 18 and Older with Uncontrolled High Blood Pressure,** by Age, 2009–2010

Source II.8: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



*Reported whether they had ever been told by a health professional that they have high blood pressure; total estimates are age-adjusted. **Includes a measured systolic pressure (during heartbeats) of ≥ 140 mmHg or a diastolic blood pressure (between heartbeats) ≥ 90 mmHg.