The Silent Killer
By Bob Porter, MD

If it’s not broke, don’t fix it. If it doesn’t hurt, don’t worry. Good advice? Sometimes. One exception is hypertension or high blood pressure. This has been called the “silent killer” because it frequently causes no symptoms until it produces devastating problems. It is a huge factor in heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and death. All of this may happen with no warning symptoms. The only way to know is to check your blood pressure.

What constitutes an abnormal level may vary slightly from person to person. However, it is fair to say a reading above 140/90 is high. Blood pressures may be screened in a physician or dentist’s office, in a drug store, or even in an individual’s own home. At Wal-Mart the price of a blood pressure kit is as low as $13.87. While your doctor needs to be involved in treatment it is the patient’s responsibility to know his own readings, monitor these, and follow the effects of therapy. After all, if your BP is not controlled - regardless of the reason, the only person’s body to suffer harm is yours.

About Bob

- Wake Forest University, BS degree
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