

Let Eisenhower Check It

At the Eisenhower Healthy Living Resource Center



Luckily, it is easy to monitor blood pressure, and checking blood pressure is a routine procedure for virtually any visit to a physician or hospital, and for many dental visits. It is also a free service that many health care institutions and social service agencies provide, including Eisenhower Medical Center. The key is ensuring that blood pressure screenings are reliable and accurate.

At Eisenhower, free blood pressure checks are available every day at the Eisenhower Healthy Living Resource Center. Patients do not need an appointment, but can walk in, at any time during business hours, and have their blood pressure checked. According to Susan Heggie, Manager, Eisenhower Healthy Living Resource Center, patients are also given a card with the results of their test, so they can track their pressure, and also share the information with their doctor.

"It's really important to monitor your blood pressure, but it's also very important to have your blood pressure taken correctly," Heggie says. "The patient needs to sit quietly for a few minutes before we take a reading."

HEALTHY LIVING RESOURCE CENTER IS CLOSED ON FRIDAYS DURING THE SUMMER. Please call 760-568-1234 for more information.

Hypertension is called "the silent killer" because people with high blood pressure rarely exhibit any symptoms, and they may not realize they suffer from hypertension until it is too late and they have a heart attack or stroke. It is estimated that one-third of the people who may already have high blood pressure, do not even know it.

WHAT'S UP?

At Eisenhower, blood pressure is tested with an inflatable arm cuff, a stethoscope and a gauge that measures pressure in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). The cuff is placed just above the elbow, with the stethoscope placed in the hollow of the elbow, resting on the arm's brachial artery. The cuff is then inflated up to a pressure reading of 180 mmHg, which causes the arteries to temporarily collapse, and the blood flow to stop (which is what causes the brief pressure and discomfort that patients can feel when they take the test).

The valve on the pump is then released to allow the pressure of the cuff to decrease. As the pressure slowly drops, the person administering the test listens through the stethoscope in order to hear when the artery opens and blood begins flowing again. The reading on the gauge at that moment is the systolic blood pressure. When the sound disappears, a second reading is taken from the gauge, which is the diastolic pressure.