

3.12 Cardiovascular Health - Hypertension

Warren, aged 50 has just been diagnosed with stage I hypertension.

Provide: You're 24 hour blood pressure monitor has confirmed that you do have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension.

Elicit: Do you know much about this condition?

Warren: I've heard of it, but not much really.

Provide: Think of your body's circulation system like a hot water or central heating system. The heart is a pump, connected to lots of pipes called arteries that carry blood all around the body. The pipes have a certain pressure, which changes. It goes up when the pump squeezes and it drops when the pump relaxes. This gives us the high and low readings. In hypertension, the pressure stays higher than it should. This high pressure can damage the delicate pipes or blood vessels around the body. High blood pressure can cause stroke, heart disease, kidney problems and eye problems if it is not treated. Caffeine, alcohol and salt are things that we can minimise to bring blood pressure down. Salt can be replaced with LoSalt but watch out for processed foods which often have extra salt and sugar in them. Bringing your weight down by half a stone can make a big difference to your blood pressure. Try to minimise the amount of fat you eat since that will help you to control your weight.