

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE THE SILENT KILLER

BRAIN

Stroke (cardiovascular accident)

High blood pressure is the primary risk factor for strokes, both ischemic and haemorrhagic

Dementia

Minor blood vessels thicken, harden and become blocked. The blood supply to the brain deteriorates, increasing the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease



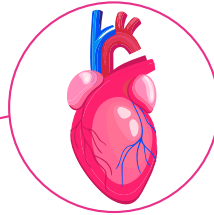
EYES

Retinopathy

The blood vessels at the back of the eye are affected, which can lead to loss of vision in one or even both eyes

AORTA

The aorta tears all along its length: aortic dissection, a life threatening emergency



HEART

Heart failure

The heart has to work harder to maintain a regular pulse. Eventually, the left ventricle wall thickens and does not contract properly, and the vital organs do not get enough blood

Heart attack

Atheroma plaques develop and can break up, leading to blood clots that result in a blocked artery and hence a heart attack

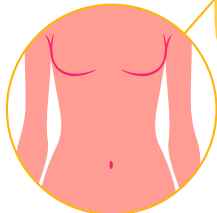
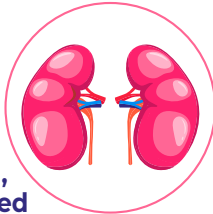
Arythmia

High blood pressure promotes heart rhythm disturbances, including atrial fibrillation with risk of heart attack

KIDNEYS

Kidney failure

Nephrons, which filter out toxins and waste from the blood, are gradually destroyed as minor blood vessels get blocked – this can lead to dialysis



STOMACH

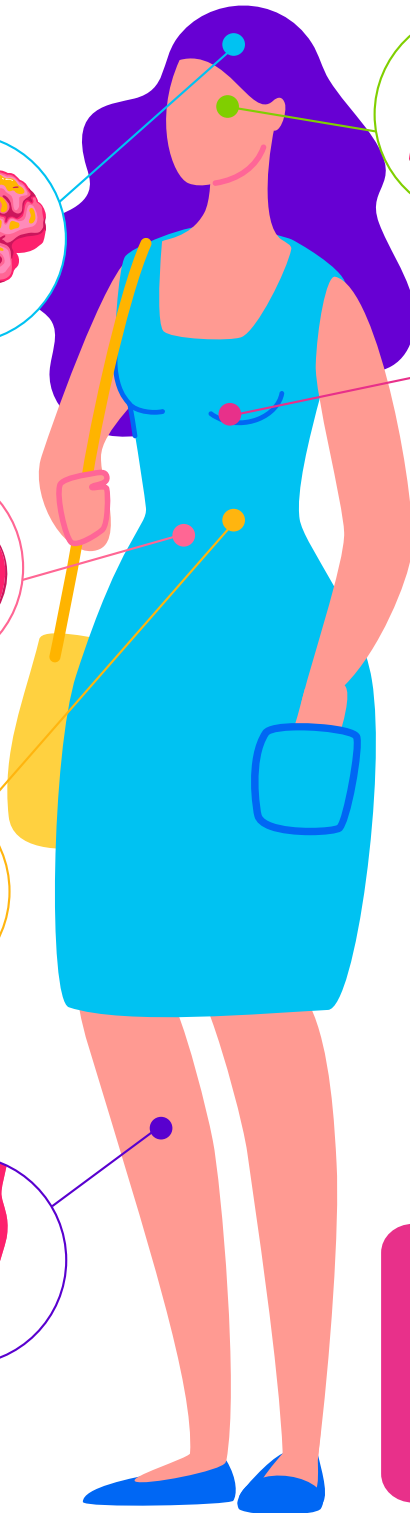
Abdominal aortic rupture

The aorta swells and weakens, causing the formation of an aneurysm, which is a bulge that can burst at any time – this is a life-threatening emergency

LEGS

Peripheral artery disease

Hardening and narrowing (owing to atheroma plaques) of the arteries causes cramps in the calf, buttock or instep, with pain when walking. If the leg no longer receives any blood, there is a risk of amputation



How do I know if I have high blood pressure?

Blood pressure should be no higher than **135/85** when you take it yourself



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Women's Cardiovascular Healthcare Foundation

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