

Dialogue with the Doctor

Doctor: Hi Becky. I see you are here today to talk about hypertension.

Patient: Yes. I came for my annual checkup last week, and the nurse said my blood pressure is high. I do not feel sick, though.

Doctor: Your blood pressure is 142 over 93, which is high. Many people with hypertension do not feel sick.

Patient: If I do not feel sick, why do I need to worry about high blood pressure?

Doctor: Hypertension, or high blood pressure, can cause many serious problems like heart attack, stroke and kidney failure. If you do not treat high blood pressure you can die from one of these problems.

Patient: How do I treat my high blood pressure?

Doctor: Your blood pressure is high, so I think you should try a daily medication.

Patient: I have to take the medicine every day?

Doctor: Yes, you take the medicine one time each day.

Patient: I really do not like to take medicine every day. Is there something else I can do?

Doctor: I understand that it is inconvenient to take medicine every day, but I want you to understand your risks. If you do not control your blood pressure you are at risk for a heart attack or a stroke.

Patient: I see...

Doctor: If you want to try to control your blood pressure without medication you need to make some very major changes in your lifestyle. You need to lose weight. You must stop smoking and you must begin to exercise for 30 minutes every day. You should eat less salt and more fruits and vegetables. Do you think you can make these changes?

Patient: Yes, I would like to try.

Doctor: Let's try for three months. If you can stop smoking, exercise and lose some weight you may be able to control your blood pressure. If your blood pressure does not go down, though, you will need to take medication.

Patient: That sounds good.

Doctor: I will give you a referral to a dietitian. The dietitian can help you to make a plan to lose weight. The dietitian will also teach you about a healthier diet.

Patient: Thank you, Doctor. I will see you in three months.

