



# HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET 2004

## HYPERTENSION

**OVERVIEW:** Blood pressure refers to the force exerted by the blood against the walls of the arteries when the heart beats (systolic pressure) and when it is at rest (diastolic pressure). Hypertension or high blood pressure is diagnosed when the systolic pressure is consistently greater than or equal to 140 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) or the diastolic pressure is consistently greater than or equal to 90 mm Hg. A person is considered to have borderline hypertension or "prehypertension" when systolic pressure is between 120 and 139 mm Hg or diastolic blood pressure is between 80 and 89 mm Hg.

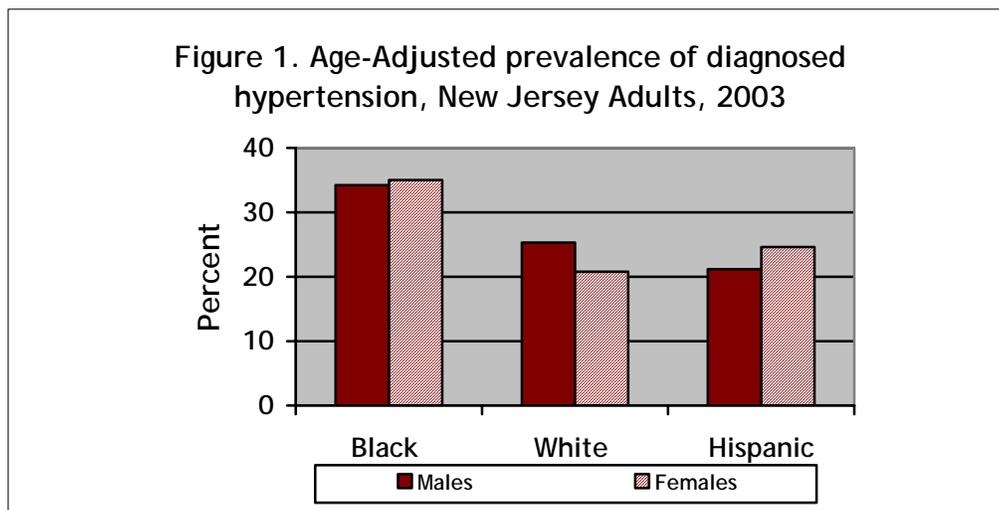
Hypertension is particularly prevalent among African Americans, the middle-aged and elderly, the obese, and heavy drinkers. People with lower educational and income levels are more likely to have hypertension. Also, people with diabetes mellitus, gout, or kidney disease are more likely to have hypertension.

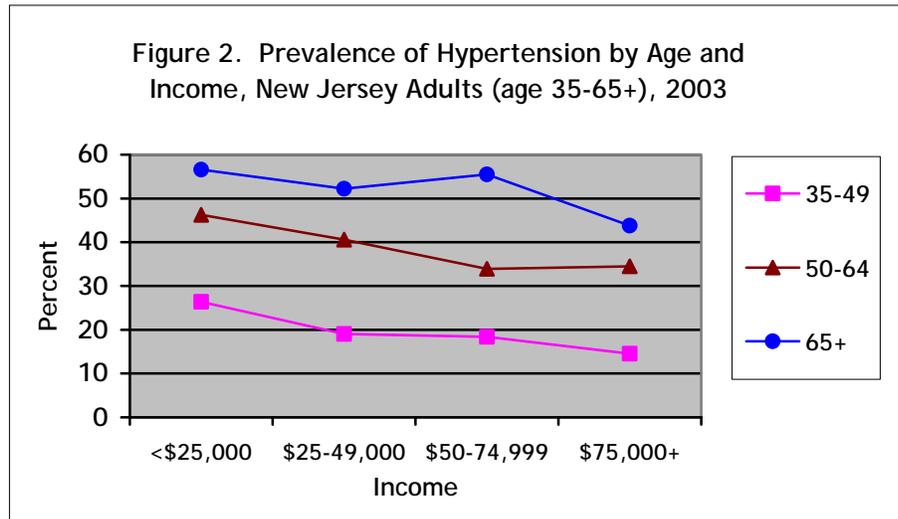
About 1 in 4 American adults have hypertension. Hypertension affects about 1 in 3 African Americans, 1 in 5 Hispanics and Native Americans, and 1 in 6 Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Hypertension can significantly increase the risk of heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States.

### NEW JERSEY FACTS:

- In New Jersey, age-adjusted hypertension mortality rates have increased by about 26% in the last few years from 4.5 per 100,000 in 1999 to 5.7 per 100,000 in 2001.
- In 2003, an estimated 26% of New Jersey adults were diagnosed with hypertension. While the prevalence of hypertension among non-Hispanic New Jersey adults remained stable in recent years among Hispanics, the age-adjusted prevalence estimates increased approximately 30% (from 18% to 24%) between 1997 and 2003. Nevertheless, non-Hispanic Black males and females both continued to have the highest prevalence of hypertension (Figure 1).





- The prevalence of hypertension increases greatly with age, averaging just over 50% among New Jersey adults age 65 and over. However, across most age groups, those with lower household income levels have a significantly higher prevalence of hypertension (Figure 2). Overall, the age-adjusted prevalence of hypertension among New Jersey adults in 2003 was about 30% among those with a household income of less than \$25,000 per year, compared with about 22% among adults with a household income of \$75,000 or greater.
- In 2003, the proportion of diagnosed hypertensives who report taking hypertension medication was 66% among non-Hispanic African-Americans, 57% among non-Hispanic Whites, and 47% among Hispanics.

#### TREATMENT AND PREVENTION:

In about 90 to 95 percent of cases of hypertension, the cause is unknown and the condition is referred to as essential or primary hypertension. Many factors can lead to hypertension in the remaining 5 to 10 percent of cases, including kidney abnormalities, a structural abnormality of the aorta, and narrowing of certain arteries.

Treatment of high blood pressure includes behavior modification and drug therapy. For example,

physical activity, weight loss and a low-salt diet can be very effective in controlling blood pressure. There usually are no symptoms of hypertension; however it can be detected through regular blood pressure check ups. This can be done in a doctor's office, hospital clinic, school, a health fair etc. It is estimated that more than 50 million Americans have hypertension, of whom 30 percent are unaware of their condition, and that only about 34 percent of hypertensives have their hypertension under control.

#### SOURCES:

American Heart Association: [High Blood Pressure](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Facts on High Blood Pressure](#); [Hypertension](#)

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: [The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on High Blood Pressure](#)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Center for Health Statistics:

[New Jersey Health Statistics, 2001](#); [New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey](#)

#### LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services:

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/chs/index.html>

For more information about High Blood Pressure Education Month:

[http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/nhbpep\\_kit/index.htm](http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/nhbpep_kit/index.htm)



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