

## **Mission Possible: Prevent and Control High Blood Pressure**

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May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month. National High Blood Pressure Education Month marks the "kickoff" of high blood pressure prevention and control activities for the year. "**Mission Possible: Prevent and Control High Blood Pressure**" is the theme of the 2006 Campaign. Mercy Circle of Care has joined up with the national campaign to provide information and activities to prevent and control high blood pressure in our community. In order to prevent and control this disease, you first need to arm yourself with some basic information about high blood pressure.

### **What is High Blood Pressure?**

High blood pressure is also called Hypertension. Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries. When that force stays too high, it becomes life threatening. It makes the heart work too hard, hardens the walls of arteries, and can cause the brain to hemorrhage or the kidneys to function poorly or not at all. A blood pressure reading of 140/90 mmHg or higher is considered high.

### **Who can Develop High Blood Pressure?**

High blood pressure is very common. About 65 million American adults have high blood pressure. Unfortunately, African Americans are more likely than Whites to develop high blood pressure. Others at risk for developing high blood pressure are the overweight and those with a family history of high blood pressure.

### **How is it Detected?**

You can find out if you have high blood pressure by having your blood pressure checked regularly. Most doctors will diagnose a person with high blood pressure on the basis of two or more readings, taken on several occasions. A consistent blood pressure reading of 140/90 mmHg or higher is considered high blood pressure.

### **How Can You Prevent High Blood Pressure?**

#### Be Physical Active and Maintain a Healthy Weight

Being physically active is one of the most important steps you can take to prevent or control high blood pressure. Mercy Circle of Care offers three convenient fitness centers with a variety of exercise programs that will help you lose or control your weight.

#### Follow a Healthy Eating Pattern

Many people need help with learning how to follow a healthy diet. Mercy Circle of Care has nutritionists that will help you develop a personalized nutrition plan.

#### Quit Smoking

Mercy Circle of Care can connect you with smoking cessation programs in the community.

To learn more about how you can prevent or control high blood pressure, **call Mercy Circle of Care at 215-863-6100**