

Hypertension - Why the Choice of Treatment Depends on Cardiovascular Risk

According to the recommendation from *smarter medicine / Choosing Wisely*, a risk-benefit assessment should be made prior to initiation of any medication to treat hypertension. This assessment should be based on your cardiovascular risk, i.e. your overall risk of having a heart attack or stroke, as evaluated by your primary care provider.

Cardiovascular Risk

The cardiovascular (concerning the heart and the vessels) risk refers to your individual likelihood of developing or dying from a cardiovascular event (e.g. heart attack, stroke), usually estimated over the next 10 years.

Factors that influence the cardiovascular risk:

- Hypertension
- Age and sex
- Family history of heart attack / stroke before the age of 60
- Smoking
- High blood fats (e.g. cholesterol)
- Diabetes (high blood sugar)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Heart and vascular diseases

Lifestyle Changes to Help Lower Blood Pressure

- Smoking cessation
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Regular physical activity
- Balanced, low-sodium diet
- Stress reduction

Next Steps

If you believe you have hypertension, discuss next steps with your primary care provider.

If you measure your blood pressure regularly and it is not elevated, you should continue to measure it once a year. As a preventive measure, you can make lifestyle changes as needed.