

## Patient information

# Managing high blood pressure before your eye surgery

### What is hypertension?

Hypertension is the medical term for high blood pressure. Blood pressure is the measure of the pressure of the blood as it flows through the arteries. When it is measured, two numbers are recorded: the higher number (known as systolic pressure) is the pressure produced when the heart is contracting; the lower number (known as diastolic pressure) is the pressure it falls back to when the heart is relaxed.

Blood pressure varies between individuals and usually rises with age. Occasionally it may be caused by an underlying problem but usually there is no underlying cause.

High blood pressure affects 10 million people in the UK and even 1 in 600 children. It does not usually cause problems in everyday life and rarely causes symptoms unless very high. However, over a long period of time, if left untreated, hypertension increases the risk of having a stroke or a heart attack.

Current recommendations suggest that blood pressure taken on separate occasions, which is consistently shown to be 160/100 or higher needs to be treated. A blood pressure below 138/80 is considered normal.

Your GP and anaesthetist may feel that a different target blood pressure is right for you; they will be happy to discuss this with you.

## **Why is high blood pressure important?**

Having high blood pressure over a long period of time can increase your risk of a stroke or heart attack, particularly if you have other problems such as kidney disease or diabetes.

Your ophthalmology consultant has probably mentioned to you that having an operation carries some risks. The risk of having a heart attack and stroke during or shortly after the operation can be reduced by making sure your blood pressure is as good as it can be before surgery.

Sometimes being anxious or rushing to an appointment can make your blood pressure go up. We have therefore asked you to have your blood pressure checked 2 or 3 times by your GP surgery.

***Please use this leaflet to record your blood pressure readings.***

If your readings are normal please let us know so that your surgery can go ahead as planned. If you need to start or change medication, please also let us know as your surgery may need to be postponed for a short time. Normally the anaesthetist would like to see your blood pressure is controlled for at least 6 weeks prior to surgery.

You can help lower your blood pressure by:

- Cutting down salt intake to less than 6g a day
- Eating a healthy, low fat, balanced diet

- Being active
- Cutting down alcohol
- Stopping smoking
- Losing weight
- Drinking less coffee, tea or other caffeine rich drinks
- Trying relaxation therapies, such as meditation and stress management

## Blood pressure readings

### Readings at pre-operative clinic

1 /

2 /

3 /

Current medication: .....

.....

### Readings in doctor's surgery / home

4 /

5 /

6 /

Medication started or changed: .....

.....

***Please bring this leaflet with you to clinic/on admission.***

If you have any further questions or worries, either before or after the surgery, please do not hesitate to ask one of the nurses or contact the:

### **Eye Treatment Centre**

on

01284 713815 / 01284 712636

Monday – Thursday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the hospital website [www.wsh.nhs.uk](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk) and click on the link, or visit the disabledgo website:*

*<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>*