



# Harris County Hospital District

Media Contact: Nicole Aguilar  
Office: 713-566-6761  
Cell: 281-782-9518  
Nicole\_Aguilar@hchd.tmc.edu  
On-call pager: 713-566-6430

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **A Silent Killer That Can Cost You Your Life**

HOUSTON (Sept. 28, 2006) – Keeping a close watch on two numbers could keep you healthy – and possibly even save your life.

It's estimated that a third of all American adults have high blood pressure or hypertension, yet don't even know it.

High blood pressure, often called the "silent killer," is often a major indicator of future heart disease, stroke and other serious conditions.

"To lower a person's risk of high blood pressure, they should exercise and watch their diet, especially their sodium intake," said Dr. LaResa Ridge, a physician at E.A. "Squatty" Lyons Health Center, a part of the Harris County Hospital District. Other ways to naturally lower blood pressure include losing excess weight, reducing or limiting alcohol consumption, stopping smoking, and reducing stress as much as possible.

Blood pressure measures the force of blood against the artery walls. It is often written or stated as two numbers. The first number, called systolic, represents the pressure when the heart contracts. The second number, diastolic, represents the pressure when the heart rests between beats.

Normal blood pressure is lower than 120/80. A person's blood pressure is considered high when they have two blood pressure readings higher than 140/90.

The Harris County Hospital District is the public health care system for the nation's third most populous county. It provides more than 1.1 million health care visits each year to uninsured and underinsured residents of Harris County. The district operates Ben Taub General Hospital, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, Quentin Mease Community Hospital, 12 community health centers, a dental center, eight school-based clinics, 13 homeless shelter clinics and four mobile health units.

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