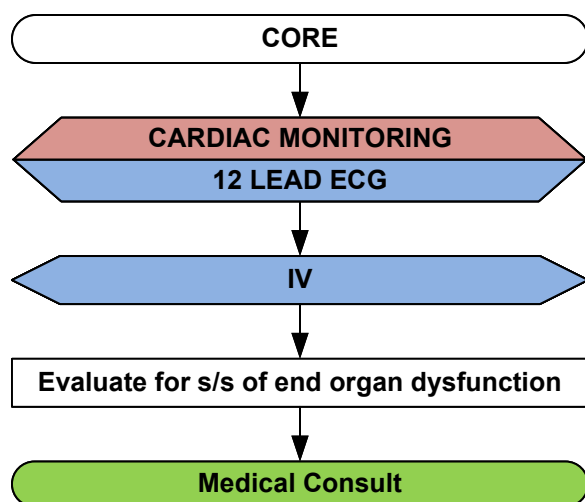


# HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>History:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hypertension</li> <li>○ Non-compliant with anti-hypertensive medications</li> <li>○ Associated diseases: diabetes, hypertension, CAD</li> <li>○ SAMPLE</li> </ul> | <b>Signs and Symptoms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Systolic blood pressure &gt; 220 mmHg</li> <li>○ Diastolic blood pressure &gt; 120 mmHg</li> <li>○ Headache</li> <li>○ Chest pain</li> <li>○ Dyspnea</li> <li>○ AMI</li> <li>○ Acute renal failure</li> <li>○ Altered mental status related to hypertension</li> </ul> | <b>Differential:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stroke—Thrombotic, Embolic, Hemorrhagic</li> <li>○ Hypertensive Urgency</li> <li>○ Primary CNS Injury</li> <li>○ Myocardial Infarction</li> <li>○ Aortic Dissection / Aneurysm</li> <li>○ Pre-eclampsia / Eclampsia</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



| Legend          |
|-----------------|
| EMT             |
| AEMT            |
| Paramedic       |
| Medical Consult |

Consider other protocols as indicated:

**AIRWAY**  
**ACUTE CORONARY SYNDROME**  
**SEIZURE**  
**STROKE**

## Pearls:

- Unless contraindicated, a blood pressure should be obtained in each arm.
- Hypertension is not uncommon especially in an emergency setting. Hypertension is usually transient and in response to stress and/or pain. A hypertensive emergency is based on blood pressure along with symptoms which suggest an organ is suffering damage such as MI, CVA or renal failure. This is very difficult to determine in the pre-hospital setting in most cases.
- Hypertensive Urgencies are not associated with end organ dysfunction.
- Aggressive treatment of hypertension can result in harm. Most patients, even with significant elevation in blood pressure, need only supportive care. Specific complaints such as chest pain, dyspnea, pulmonary edema or altered mental status should be treated based on those specific protocols.
- Patients over 40 years-old with 3 or more major cardiac risk factors i.e.-tobacco (packs per day x years), hypertension, hyperlipidemia, genetics (mother, father, brother, or sister had MI or CABG prior to age 55), cocaine use, diabetes, should have a 12 lead ECG performed.
- Symptomatic patients with hypertension should be transported with their head elevated at 30 degrees.