

BIHS Statement on Referral to a Hypertension Specialist

The BIHS recommend that practitioners considering referral to a hypertension specialist will have demonstrated:

1. Raised blood pressure evidenced by ABPM and/or HBPM
2. The NICE guideline “*Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management [NG136]*” has been followed
3. Concordance with medication has been assessed
4. One or more of the BIHS referral criteria have been met

BIHS criteria for routine referrals	Supported by
Age under 40 years at diagnosis, irrespective of current age	NICE, ESC/ESH
Suspected secondary hypertension, including but not limited to hyperaldosteronism (e.g. hypokalaemia); phaeochromocytoma (e.g. palpitations, headache, flushing, family history, history of neurofibromatosis); drug induced hypertension (e.g. OCP, tricyclic antidepressants, SSNRI, Methylphenidate). Please note these are common examples but do not represent an exhaustive list of the secondary causes of hypertension.	NICE, ESC/ESH, ISH
Hypertension in pregnancy and women who remain hypertensive postpartum. Requires a multi-disciplinary team approach.	NICE
Resistant hypertension defined as blood pressure uncontrolled on maximum tolerated doses of A+C+D, Step 4 treatment considered, confirmed by repeat ABPM, concordance assessed.	NICE, ESC/ESH, ISH
Persistent symptomatic postural hypotension despite medication adjustment (supine to standing ≥ 20 mmHg AND/OR sitting to standing ≥ 15 mmHg).	NICE
Complex polypharmacy	ESC/ESH
BIHS criteria for emergency/same day referrals	Supported by
Malignant/accelerated phase hypertension. Blood pressure $\geq 180/120$ mmHg with retinal haemorrhage or papilloedema	NICE, ESC/ESH
Hypertensive crisis. Life threatening end-organ damage even in the context of severe or mild hypertension. Including acute aortic dissection, acute renal failure, stroke, acute myocardial ischaemia, acute heart failure, phaeochromocytoma.	NICE, ESC/ESH
Pre-eclampsia and severe hypertension in pregnancy. Requires a multi-disciplinary team approach.	NICE, ESC/ESH

References

- [1] National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management. **NICE guideline** [NG136]. Updated 2022. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng136>
- [2] National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Hypertension in pregnancy: diagnosis and management. **NICE guideline** [NG133]. 2019. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng133>
- [3] Bryan Williams, Giuseppe Mancia, Wilko Spiering, Enrico Agabiti Rosei, Michel Azizi, Michel Burnier, Denis L Clement, Antonio Coca, Giovanni de Simone, Anna Dominiczak, Thomas Kahan, Felix Mahfoud, Josep Redon, Luis Ruilope, Alberto Zanchetti, Mary Kerins, Sverre E Kjeldsen, Reinhold Kreutz, Stephane Laurent, Gregory Y H Lip, Richard McManus, Krzysztof Narkiewicz, Frank Ruschitzka, Roland E Schmieder, Evgeny Shlyakhto, Costas Tsioufis, Victor Aboyans, Ileana Desormais, ESC Scientific Document Group, 2018 ESC/ESH Guidelines for the management of arterial hypertension: The Task Force for the management of arterial hypertension of the **European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and the European Society of Hypertension (ESH)**, *European Heart Journal*, Volume 39, Issue 33, 01 September 2018, Pages 3021–3104, <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehy339>
- [4] Unger T, Borghi C, Charchar F, Khan NA, Poulter NR, Prabhakaran D, Ramirez A, Schlaich M, Stergiou GS, Tomaszewski M, Wainford RD, Williams B, Schutte AE. 2020 **International Society of Hypertension** Global Hypertension Practice Guidelines. *Hypertension*. 2020 Jun;75(6):1334-1357. doi: 10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.120.15026. Epub 2020 May 6. PMID: 32370572.