Minority Health Blood Pressure

Volume 1, Issue 1

August 2006

Blood Pressure Prevention

As an African American, American Indian, or Hispanic, you have a greater chance of having high blood pressure. Your chances of having high blood pressure may be due to several things ranging from family history, ethnic background, lifestyle management, and lack of information available to you to help prevent high blood pressure. This information will give you first line efforts you can take to better your lifestyle and, hopefully, prevent high blood pressure in your life.

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a leading cause of stroke or heart disease in any person when it is not controlled by medication and lifestyle changes. High blood pressure has few, if any, symptoms that lets you know you have it. This is the reason it is known as the "silent killer". High blood pressure is a disease of the blood vessels. High blood pressure makes it hard for your heart to pump blood throughout your body.

Your blood pressure is one of the easiest things for you to keep track of and one of the cheapest ways to manage your health. Many drugstores, discount stores, and grocery stores have blood pressure machines, so you can keep track of your blood pressure numbers with no charge to you.

Easy steps to follow:

- *Maintain a healthy weight.*
- *Be physically active.*
- *Follow a healthy eating plan.*
- *Reduce sodium (salt) in your diet.*
- *Share information with family members.*
- *Eliminate or limit alcohol intake to 1 to 2 drinks per day.*
- *If you have high blood pressure see your health-care provider.*

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Exercise

Start your own exercise program.

- Thirty minutes a day of walking is the cheapest and the easiest type of exercise. You may want to start at 10 to 15 minutes per day of physical exercise and build yourself up to the 30 minutes of activity every day.
- Did you know that gardening, doing yard work, or dancing is a form of exercise? If done on a daily basis it can help you to keep your blood pressure under control and help prevent heart disease.
- Walk with a family member or a friend on a daily basis. When exercise is used along with a diet control method, it is also a stepping stone to weight loss.

Eating on the light side

It will take time to change your diet, so take the easy steps first.

- Watching your salt intake and fat intake in your diet does not mean that you will not be able to eat the foods you like.
- Eating baked or broiled meats such as chicken or fish can reduce the fat; another way to reduce the fat in your diet is to use 1% milk.

- If you feel the need to have fried foods, use canola oil or vegetable oil rather than solid shortening or lard to fry foods.
- Try to eat at least five servings of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains on a daily basis. Instead of eating a doughnut or a honey bun, eat a piece of fresh fruit.
- Limit the amount of lunch meat, bacon, and ham you eat on a daily basis because they are all high in salt.
- An easy and cheap method to reduce salt in your diet is to remove the salt shaker from the table.
- When using canned vegetables, drain the liquid and rinse in cold water before cooking.
- Use herbs instead of salt for seasoning such as basil, rosemary, or Ms. Dash™.
- Eliminate or limit alcohol intake to 1 to 2 drinks per day.

Lifestyle Changes (continued)

Smoking Cessation

Stop smoking as soon as possible. There are over-the-counter patches and lozenges that can help you to end your smoking habit. But remember you have to want to stop smoking in order to make this successful.

Share

You can easily help and teach other family members and friends a healthy better way of life by telling them the things you are doing to help make your life better and to prevent high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease. Help them to get started with the lifestyle changes.

"Prevention makes you healthier."

New Potato Salad

16	small	new potatoes (5 cups)
2	Tbsp	olive oil
1/4	cup	green onions, chopped
1/4	tsp	black pepper
1	tsp	dill weed, dried

Thoroughly clean the potatoes with a vegetable brush and water.

Boil potatoes for 20 minutes or until tender.

Drain and cool potatoes for 20 minutes.

Cut potatoes into quarters and mix with olive oil, onions, and spices.

Makes 5 servings. Serving size: 1 cup

Per serving:

Calories	187	Sodium	12
Total Fat	6 g	Calcium	21
Saturated fat	1 g	Magnesium	36
Cholesterol	0 mg	Potassium	547
Fiber	3 g		

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Know Your Numbers

High blood pressure consists of two numbers; the top number which is known as your **systolic** pressure and the bottom number which is known as **diastolic** pressure. The normal for the top number should be less than 120 and the bottom number should be less than 80. It is important for you to know your numbers.

If you don't have high blood pressure being aware of the blood pressure numbers will help prevent this lifetime disease.

Blood pressure is usually read as:

110 (systolic)

——— over

70 (diastolic)

This information is for educational purposes, it is not intended to replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice about a specific medical condition.