Hypertension Prevention

By living a healthy lifestyle, you can help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range. This is important to protect your kidney, eye, and brain functioning, as well as, preventing heart disease and stroke.

Your Blood pressure is measured using two numbers: The first number, called <u>Systolic,</u> measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The second number, called <u>Diastolic</u>, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats. According to the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure, "Normal" is below 120/80, "At risk" is 120-139/80-89, and "High" (hypertension) is 140 or higher/90 or higher. High blood pressure usually has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people do not know they have it.

Here are a few lifestyle changes that can help keep your blood pressure in a healthy range:

- Eat a healthy diet. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Foods rich in potassium, fiber, and protein and lower in salt (sodium) and saturated fats help keep blood pressure low and protect against heart disease and stroke.

- Keep a healthy weight. Carrying extra weight may increase blood pressure because your heart needs to pump harder to supply blood to all your cells.

- Be physically active. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults get at least <u>2 hours and 30</u> minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as a brisk walk, run, swim, or bike ride <u>every week</u>. That's about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

- Avoid tobacco products. Smoking and using other tobacco products raise your blood pressure and puts you at higher risk for heart attack and stroke. However, quitting tobacco products can lower your risk for heart disease back into the normal range.

- Limit how much alcohol you drink. Alcohol use raises blood pressure. The CDC recommends that men should have no more than 2 alcoholic drinks per day, and women should have no more than 1 alcoholic drink per day.

- Get adequate sleep. Getting enough quality sleep is an important part of keeping your heart and blood vessels healthy. The less you sleep, the higher your blood pressure will likely go up. This has to do with your body's hormone regulation, which sleep helps control.

<u>Chronic stress</u> is also associated with hypertension. Stress can manifest as unhealthy lifestyle habits that can ultimately impact your cardiovascular risk. For example, when stressed, people oftentimes maintain a poor diet, get less exercise, less sleep, and increase alcohol and tobacco use. Sound familiar? So, by practicing the healthy lifestyle choices listed above, you can lower your stress and your blood pressure.

For additional information visit: https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/prevent.htm

Questions? Contact us at 363ISRW.ART.363ISRW@us.af.mil or at 757-764-9316