



Newsletter November 2009

### **Managing Hypertension**

Hypertension is the term used to describe high blood pressure. There are two numbers you need to know. The top number is the systolic blood pressure and the bottom number is the diastolic blood pressure. If your top number is consistently 140mm or higher **or** your bottom number is consistently 90mm or higher, you have hypertension or high blood pressure. Hypertension is often referred to as the silent killer because people often do not even know they have it. Left untreated, hypertension can have detrimental effects on many of your body organs, especially your kidneys.

When one has **borderline** hypertension, there are several things you should do to help reduce your blood pressure to a normal range before resorting to medications. If you are overweight, you should try to reduce your weight to an acceptable range for your height by eating a balanced and healthy diet. Daily exercise for 30 minutes a day is beneficial for helping to reduce your weight as well as your blood pressure. If you smoke – stop! Smoking constricts and hardens your blood vessels and makes your heart work harder to pump the blood throughout your body.

It is well known that stress can affect your blood pressure. All of us have daily stressors in our lives. How we deal with that stress can affect our long-term health, but especially our blood pressure. Here are some helpful tips to help handle stress by changing your response to those stressful situations.

1. Instead of having a knee-jerk response to a bad situation, take the time to take a few deep breaths and **then** verbalize your concerns.
2. If you find your mind racing and speech accelerating, take a few deep breaths and start over with your conversation.
3. Give yourself enough time to get to your destination. Add 10% more time than it would take you to get there without problems.
4. Planning is key to avoiding stressful events caused by disorganization. This may include simple things such as packing lunches the night before, planning your meals the day before or picking out your clothes or your child's clothes for the next day. You will be surprised how these simple tasks will make things smoother and less stressful.
5. Organize your environment to be user-friendly - whether it be the cupboards at home or your office at work.
6. Plan time for yourself daily - whether it be reading a good book or walking on the beach.
7. Eat healthy as your stress hormones deplete your natural resistance to infections.
8. Avoid being Johnny- on-the-spot at home. Your family members must accept the fact that you cannot always drop what you are doing to help them with trivial or unimportant things.

If you feel your pressure rising, whether it be flushing in the face or your voice rising or racing, take a 15 minute time-out.

1. Lie in a dark room and begin with 10 slow deep breathes. Place your hand on your stomach and feel your diaphragm rise and fall with each breath.
2. Next, lay there for another 3-5 minutes quietly and breathe normally.

3. Then begin deep breathing again and focus on relaxing – first your face muscles, next, your arms, chest, stomach, thighs, calves and finally your feet and toes. Take 10 slow deep breathes.

If you are in a place where lying down is impractical, sit down, close your eyes and take 10 deep breathes. Rest 1-2 minutes and repeat with another 10 deep breathes.

As stated earlier, hypertension on a prolonged basis can be detrimental. Following the above recommendations may not be enough for many people with high blood pressure. There are several supplements including herbal remedies that can assist in your quest to lower blood pressure and are usually cheaper and with less side-effects than medications.. Medications should be considered when all other attempts are unsuccessful. Take charge of your health and do everything you can to keep your blood pressure within normal limits before resorting to medications. Consult your wellness physician if your blood pressure remains consistently above 140/90.

Best in Health,

Dr. Res

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