

Title:

What Everyone Needs to Know about High Blood Pressure

Word Count:

418

Summary:

High blood pressure - or "hypertension" - is a major public health problem that affects up to 1 in 4 Americans. Here's what you need to know about what causes high blood pressure and what you can do to lower your blood pressure.

Keywords:

High blood pressure, hypertension

Article Body:

High blood pressure - or "hypertension" - is a major public health problem that affects up to 1 in 4 Americans.

There are two types of high blood pressure, primary hypertension and secondary hypertension.

Primary hypertension accounts for 95% of hypertension and has several contributing factors.

Secondary hypertension (obviously the other 5% of hypertension cases) occurs when there is a malfunction in one of the body's organs or systems.

Primary (or essential) hypertension can be attributed to a variety of factors. Roughly 30% of cases can be attributed to genetic factors. For example, high blood pressure affects more African-Americans than Asians or Caucasians. In addition, you're twice as likely to suffer from high blood pressure if either of your parents had it.

The majority of people with primary hypertension have a particular abnormality - increased stiffness or resistance in the peripheral arteries, the arteries farthest away from the heart . These peripheral arteries are crucial in providing oxygen-rich blood and nutrients to all tissues and organs of the body.

This rigidity is present in those patients whose primary hypertension is related to genetic factors, lack of exercise, excessive salt intake, and aging. The exact cause of this hardening is unknown.

Treatment of high blood pressure involves evaluating certain lifestyle factors and making suitable modifications.

Obesity

This is common with patients with high blood pressure and becomes more prevalent with age. Obesity is definitely a contributing factor in high blood pressure because the heart has to work harder to deliver blood to supply the excess tissue.

Also, obese people with high blood pressure have a greater rigidity in their peripheral arteries. In addition, obesity highly correlates with a tendency for the kidneys to retain salt.

Therefore, a proper weight loss routine may aid in lowering the blood pressure.

Exercise

Regular exercise can help decrease high blood pressure in the long term. Research shows that the more you exercise, the more you decrease the blood pressure although the benefits of lower blood pressure deriving from exercise appears to occur much more with aerobic exercise than anaerobic exercise such as strength training.

Smoking

Although smoking is not directly associated to the development of high blood pressure, it does increase the risk of other complications such as heart disease and stroke.

Ironically, some smokers may potentially have lower blood pressure than non-smokers because nicotine in cigarettes causes decreased appetite, which can lead to weight loss which, in turn, leads to lower blood pressure.

Alcohol

Drinking excessive alcohol (over 2 drinks per day) may double your chances of suffering from high blood pressure.