

ADVISORY

For Immediate Publication

Know Your Blood Pressure
17th MAY 2017: WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY

New Delhi, May 16, 2017: World Hypertension day, observed on the 17th of May every year, calls out for increasing awareness about this silent killer and help people realise that hypertension or high blood pressure is a preventable and controllable condition. The theme for the year 2017 is '**Know Your Blood Pressure**'.

According to the World health Organization (WHO), hypertension, also known as high or raised blood pressure (BP), is a condition in which the blood vessels have persistently raised pressure, putting them under increased stress. BP is created by the force of blood pushing against the walls of blood vessels (arteries) as it is pumped by the heart. The higher the pressure, the harder the heart has to pump. Normal adult blood pressure is 120 mm Hg¹ when the heart beats (systolic) and about 80 mm Hg when the heart relaxes (diastolic). When systolic BP is equal to or above 140 mm Hg and the diastolic BP is equal to or above 90 mm Hg, BP is considered as high¹. High blood pressure damages the heart and blood vessels in organs such as brain, kidney and is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Over a billion people all over the world suffer from hypertension and it is predicted to increase by 60% to 1.56 billion in 2025. It kills 8 million people every year worldwide and is a leading risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, foetal and maternal death in pregnancy, dementia and renal failure. Two thirds of those with hypertension live in economically developing countries, including India. It is directly responsible for 57% of all stroke deaths and 24% of all coronary heart disease deaths in Indiaⁱⁱ. Sedentary lifestyles, growing urbanization, tobacco use and fast food culture are some primary causes for high blood pressure. It is called the silent killer as it presents very little symptoms.

Dr Tapan Ghose, Director, Cardiology, Fortis Ft. Lt. Rajan Dhall Hospital, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi gives some valuable information below to recognize and manage hypertension effectively:

Symptoms for Early detection

- Early-morning headache
- Nosebleeds
- Irregular heartbeats
- Buzzing in the ears
- Tiredness, dizziness, weakness
- Nausea, confusion, anxiety

- Chest pain, Muscle tremors, breathlessness

Causes:

- Lack of exercise
- Alcohol consumption, smoking
- Obesity
- Genetics (More chances of suffering from the condition If one or both parents have it)
- Use of birth control pills

Salt and Hypertension:

Having excess salt places strain on the arteries which carry blood, as a result of which, the tiny muscles in the artery walls become stronger and thicker. This makes the space inside the arteries smaller, raising blood pressure. The arteries gradually become so narrow that they clog up and the organs of the body receiving the blood become starved of oxygen and vital nutrients.

Prevention:

- Learning to manage stress through regular exercise, yoga, meditation
- Limiting intake of sodium by reducing the amount of salt
- Having a healthy diet, avoiding food with high saturated fats
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Being physically active
- Avoiding tobacco use and reducing alcohol intake
- Regularly checking blood pressure
- Maintaining a healthy weight as per age and body type

Workplace wellness programmes to tackle hypertension:

- Using the stairs instead of the lift, elevator
- Carrying home-cooked food instead of ordering take-out
- Getting up frequently from work stations and walking around every hour
- Staying calm under pressure and finding ways to manage workplace stress by taking a walk, deep breathing or talking it out with a colleague

About Fortis Healthcare Limited

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ⁱ <http://www.who.int/features/qa/82/en/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4011565/>