

High Blood Pressure Awareness

May is known as High Blood Pressure Awareness month. It is a serious disease that affects over half adults in the United States and is the biggest risk factor for a stroke. Blood pressure is the pressure of blood pushing against the wall of your arteries. As blood pressure remains high over time, it causes the heart to pump harder, which essentially leads to serious health problem. These health problems include stroke, heart attacks, kidney failure or heart failure.

Blood pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and has two numbers. The top number is the systolic pressure. It is measuring the pressure in the arteries when the heart is beating. The bottom number is called diastolic pressure. It measures the pressure in the arteries between each heartbeat. Normal systolic blood pressure is 120/80 mmHg . High blood pressure at or above 130/80 mmHg. Lastly, stage 2 high blood pressure is at or above 140/90 mmHg.

As some people may not have any symptom with high blood pressure. But it is known to cause headaches, chest pains, dizziness, difficulty breathing, nausea and vomiting. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please seek immediate care.

Making daily lifestyles can help decrease and control you blood pressure. By making dietary changes, exercising, losing weight, and avoiding certain medications. There are simple lifestyle changes that can help decrease your blood pressure. Making these changes can help reduce your chance of high blood pressure or needing medications.

- 1) Exercise daily. Try to aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity daily.
- 2) Incorporate a healthy diet. Eating foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy products
- 3) Reduce your salt (sodium) intake. Use herbs or other spices to help add flavor and eat fewer processed foods.
- 4) Limit alcohol.
- 5) Quit smoking.
- 6) Get a good night's rest. Get 7 to 9 hours of sleep daily.
- 7) Relieve stress with meditation or deep breathing exercises.
- 8) Lose weight if you are overweight. Even losing 5 pounds can dramatically help reduce your blood pressure

It is very important to make these changes early to help decrease your chances of high blood pressure. Since high blood pressure is a silent killer, please seek routine care with your primary care provider for routine checkups.

Free blood pressure screenings are available if you walk in or via appointment at the Meigs County Health Department during business hours (Monday – Friday from 8AM-4PM). Please call 740-992-6626 to confirm that the public health nurse is available to serve you at a time most convenient for you.

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