

World Hypertension Day: Excess salt can lead to hypertension despite healthy diet

May 17 is World Hypertension Day, and 'Know your numbers' is the theme for 2018.



📷 Raised blood pressure due to high salt consumption is the biggest single contributing risk factor for non-communicable diseases and damage to kidney. (Photo: AFP)

Knowing the ideal number for your blood pressure (120/80) is key to maintaining good health. The most important factor in this has emerged to be the humble common salt.

Previously, experts believed that eating high amounts of fruit and vegetables might help counteract the effect of high salt on blood pressure. However, findings from a sample size of the diets of over 4000 people published in March 2018 in the journal Hypertension-by researchers from the Imperial College London and Northwestern University, showed that people eating higher amounts of salt had higher blood pressure -- no matter how healthy a person's overall diet.

Dr.Bhupendra Gandhi of the NGO Amar Gandhi Foundation says "raised blood pressure due to high salt consumption is the biggest single contributing risk factor for non-communicable diseases and damage to your kidney. Nearly 61 per cent of deaths in India are attributed to non-communicable diseases. Hence our mantra for good health is to eat #EkChammachKam salt per day.

Dr Vijay D'Silva, director of medical affairs at the Asian Heart Institute added "Hypertension can lead to cardiovascular diseases. The rise in blood pressure caused by eating too much salt may damage the arteries leading to the heart. Data shows that the prevalence of hypertension in the middle class is 32 per cent in men and 30 per cent in women."

Hypertension can affect the skin too. Dr Amit Karkhanis - Medical Cosmetologist and founder of Dr Tvacha clinic states, " High blood pressure can harden your arteries, which decreases the flow of blood and oxygen. An impairment of the flow of oxygen, to an organ such as your face, can cause your skin to dry and wrinkles faster which can make one look less youthful."

Hypertension is also known to cause trouble sleeping which leads to signs of premature ageing (fine lines, uneven pigmentation and reduced elasticity).

Another peril of hypertension is the reproductive side. Dr Rajalaxmi Walavalkar of Cocoon Fertility reckons, " anyone with hypertension is at an increased risk of infertility. A high salt diet leading to high blood pressure can result in delayed

puberty and even impact reproductive health."

Lowering salt intake, therefore, is extremely important in today's times.

This world hypertension day, the larger message is to reduce salt consumption at all costs, by at least #EkChammachKam; this is of utmost necessity since it can not only curb the problem of hypertension but can also save multiple organs from damage.