

8 Dangerous Misconceptions About Hypertension

Are you worried about high blood pressure for a family member, a friend or even yourself? Your concern is well-founded. If left untreated, high blood pressure - also called hypertension, can lead to a range of health problems, including heart disease and stroke.

Knowing more about high blood pressure can help you prevent this condition from damaging your health, or the health of someone you love. You can start by learning the facts and myths of hypertension.



Here are five common misconceptions about high blood pressure:

1) **MISCONCEPTION:** There is nothing we can do to prevent High Blood Pressure
Many people who have disease of high blood pressure in their near and dear ones have this impression that nothing can be done to prevent hypertension from occurring.

Truth: Even if a person is having many risk factors, few steps taken by us can really prevent high blood pressure from occurring.

Weight control - Maintaining the right weight according to your height or in other words proper BMI maintenance can really help in preventing occurrence of hypertension or at least helps it in keeping under check if it is there already. We can achieve this by inculcating healthy eating habits and by following a regular fitness regime.

Healthy food habits - Healthy eating habits is the cornerstone for a good lifestyle. This includes eating the right type of nutritious food, low in fat, sugar and salt. Also eating the right quantity of food that our body requires.

Salt intake - Keeping your intake of salt in check substantially helps in prevention & controlling of hypertension.
Abstaining from alcohol, smoking & tobacco consumption – Abstinance is one of the most important modifiable lifestyle activities, that really help in avoiding occurrence of hypertension.

Regular exercise – Exercise of at least 30 minutes every day, at least five days in a week helps relieve stress and helps you control your weight also.

Avoiding stress - High stress conditions add to your problem and leads to development of hypertension.

Myths & Facts

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The only way to control high blood pressure is with medication.

No not in every case, if you've been diagnosed with high blood pressure, medication is extremely important to keep it under control.

Along with medication, Eating healthy foods and getting regular physical activity that can keep your blood pressure in a healthy range.



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HORMONES AND YOUR HEART
MYTH VS FACT



I would know if I had high blood pressure.

- The reason they call "hypertension" the silent killer is there are no symptoms; the only way to know is by getting it checked.
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2) MISCONCEPTION: One abnormal reading of blood pressure means I have hypertension

Truth: One high blood pressure reading is not enough for a diagnosis of hypertension. A doctor can diagnose hypertension only after several readings are taken over a period of time. If there is one high reading, then we must measure it at least two more times on separate days to check whether it is consistently high.

3) MISCONCEPTION: I don't use table salt, so I'm in control of my sodium intake and therefore of my blood pressure

Truth: By the mere controlling table salt does not mean that you are controlling the actual salt intake. 75% of the sodium we consume is hidden in processed foods like tomato sauce, soups, condiments, canned foods and prepared mixes. Look out for words like 'soda', 'sodium' & the symbol 'Na' on labels; these words show that sodium compounds are present.

4) MISCONCEPTION: I use kosher or sea salt when I cook instead of regular table salt. They are low-sodium alternatives.

Truth: Chemically kosher salt and sea salt are the same as table salt – 40% sodium – and count the same toward total sodium consumption. Table salt is a combination of the two minerals sodium (Na) and chloride (Cl).



5) MISCONCEPTION: High blood pressure is always caused by a poor diet and lack of activity.

Truth: Certainly diet and lifestyle factors influence risk of high blood pressure. Some of the major factors include eating too many salt, wrong foods, lack of regular physical activity or being overweight/obese.

However some non modifiable risk factors for high blood pressure are things such as: Age, Family history of high blood pressure and Ethnicity

If you belong to an at-risk group, talk to your doctor about your blood pressure and make sure you are getting your blood pressure check regularly.

6) MISCONCEPTION: People with high blood pressure have nervousness, sweating, difficulty sleeping and their face becomes flushed. I don't have those symptoms so I must not have high blood pressure.

Truth: Many people have high blood pressure for years without knowing it. High blood pressure is often called "the silent killer" because it has no symptoms. You may not be aware that it might be damaging your arteries, heart and other organs. Don't make the mistake of assuming that you will be alerted by the symptoms of high blood pressure. Everybody needs to know their blood pressure reading. Diagnosis should only be made by a healthcare professional.

7) MISCONCEPTION: I don't have to measure my blood pressure at home.

Truth: Home monitoring of blood pressure is advisable since blood pressure fluctuates and home blood pressure recording chart helps physician to make proper dose adjustment.



8) MISCONCEPTION: Once my blood pressure is controlled I can stop the medicines.

Truth: High blood pressure can be a lifelong disease. It needs to be controlled with medicines which is required to be taken life long, unless your physician ask you to stop taking them. Stopping medicines once blood pressure is controlled will lead to rebound hypertension hence the medicines should not be stopped without consulting the physician.

Facts and Figures

- **30 per cent** of women and men have high blood pressure
- **30 per cent** of people with high blood pressure **DO NOT KNOW** that they have it.
- **Less than 30 percent** individuals reach target goals
- **Three times** more likely to develop heart disease.
- **Five times** more likely to develop stroke.
- **Twice** as likely to die from these as people with a normal blood pressure.