Tips on Reducing & Preventing High Blood Pressure

Reduce High Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Risks By:

- **LOSE WEIGHT.** A weight loss of 5 to 10 pounds can lower and help control blood pressure. Weight loss can also decrease blood cholesterol, triglyceride, and blood sugar levels. Weight loss is the most effective method for controlling hypertension without medication.
  - Replace a chocolate candy bar at lunch with a small apple.
  - Have baked chicken instead of fried chicken at dinner.
  - Take a 15-minute brisk walk after lunch and dinner instead of lingering at the table.

- **EXERCISING REGULARLY.** Regular exercise - such as walking, running, bicycling, or swimming laps - can prevent and reduce high blood pressure. More activity can also help reduce weight and stress. Experts recommend 30 to 60 minutes of aerobic exercise as many days of the week as possible.

- **EATING LESS FAT.** Evidence shows a low-fat diet may lower blood cholesterol and the risk for coronary artery disease. Eating less fat will also aid in weight loss.
  - Use only half the butter, margarine, or salad dressing you do now.
  - Try low-fat or fat-free condiments, such as fat-free salad dressing.

- **LIMITING ALCOHOL.** Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, add weight, and make blood pressure control more difficult. Avoid alcohol or limit yourself to two drinks a day for men, and one drink a day for women. A drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine, or 1 ounce of 100-proof liquor.
**INCREASING POTASSIUM INTAKE.** A high intake of potassium may improve your blood pressure control. Not getting enough potassium may actually increase blood pressure. Many fruits and vegetables are good sources of potassium - try to eat at least five servings a day.

**SEEING YOUR DOCTOR REGULARLY.** After your blood pressure is controlled, you should continue to have it checked regularly. Usually there are not symptoms to tell you if your blood pressure is elevated. See your doctor at least once a year to make sure your blood pressure is under control.

**CONTROLLING SALT IN YOUR DIET.** Limit sodium to less than 2300 milligrams per day by not adding salt to food, and limiting processed, convenience, and fast foods.

- Sodium-free = less than 5 mg of sodium in a serving
- Low-sodium = 140 mg or less of sodium in a serving
- Very-low-sodium = 35 mg or less of sodium in a serving
- Reduced or less sodium = sodium at least 25% less per serving than the regular version of that food
- Light or light in sodium = sodium at least 50% less per serving than the regular version of that food
- No salt added = no salt is added during the processing in a food that usually had salt added

**TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS.** If your doctor prescribes medication, take it as directed. Discuss any side effects or reactions you experience with your doctor. Do not stop taking medications without talking to your doctor.

**QUITTING SMOKING.** Smoking cigarettes does not cause chronic high blood pressure, but smoking is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease.