

Anything you want to know about hypertension? Ask!

By MARSHA SERLING
For the Emerald

Students are often confused about the meaning and complications of hypertension. The following questions and answers should help clarify some of these problems.

"What exactly is HYPERTENSION?"

Hypertension is high blood pressure. More than 24 million persons in the United States have it, yet only 10 percent are treated effectively. Only half the people who have high blood pressure are even aware they have it.

"I'm a fairly calm and easy-going person. Is it true, then, I'll never have to worry about high blood pressure? After all, I'm not very 'hyper' and I'm not very 'tense.'"

This is a common misconception. The truth is, hypertensive people are not necessarily more hyper or tense than people with normal blood pressure. There are no symptoms associated with even moderate hypertension, until complications arise.

"What can I do to make sure my blood pressure is normal?"

Get it checked regularly. This can be done today and Thursday morning at the Student Health Center.

If you have been told in the past you have high blood pressure, get it taken again. Usually three readings are made before an accurate evaluation can be determined. If you haven't had your blood pressure taken in the past year, it's important to do it now.

"Is high blood pressure dangerous?"

Yes, it might lead to a premature

Senate looking into insurance flim-flams

WASHINGTON (AP) — Agents from one insurance company sold a 76-year-old woman 13 different life and health policies in a two-year period, a Senate committee was told Tuesday by the woman's son.

The premiums on the policies totalled more than \$9,000 a year — 68 percent of her income, the woman's son said. The problem was uncovered only when his mother mentioned she was having financial trouble and had to defer some purchases, he said.

"I have loved too much or lived too long or trusted too much," Robert Lowry quoted his mother as saying.

The case history of Lucille Lowry, a resident of Otterbein Home in Lebanon, Ohio, was one of several such cases cited as the

heart attack, a stroke or a kidney disease.

"My doctor asked me if I was nervous the last time he took blood pressure. Can it go up just because of that?"

Blood pressure can increase with activity or emotional stress and decrease with sleep, (unless your dreams are like Alfred Hitchcock movies); however, true hypertension is sustained as opposed to intermittent high blood pressure. Remember, one doesn't have to be a nervous or hyper person to have hypertension.

"What numbers designate high blood pressure, and what, exactly, do these numbers mean?"

The higher the blood pressure, the more dangerous it can be. The World Health Organization defines hypertension as being above 140/95. Normal blood pressure is around 120/80.

Blood pressure is determined with a stethoscope and an instrument called a sphygmomanometer. A sphygmomanometer consists of an air bag, or cuff, and a column of mercury marked off in millimeters. The cuff is wrapped around the upper arm and pumped full of air by squeezing an attached rubber bulb.

The inflated cuff compresses the brachial artery in the arm, stopping the blood from flowing through it. Air pressure supports the column of mercury; as air is slowly let out of the cuff, the column of mercury falls.

When the cuff is no longer tight enough to prevent the passage of blood through the artery, the examiner will hear a thudding sound with the stethoscope as blood flow resumes. The height of the column of mercury when the first sound is heard is a reading of the

pressure when the heart is contracting. This is called systolic blood pressure.

The air is let out of the cuff until the sounds can no longer be heard. The pressure at this point is diastolic blood pressure — the pressure when the heart is relaxed.

Blood pressure is expressed in two numbers, for example, 120/80. The first and larger number is the systolic blood pressure, and the second number is the diastolic blood pressure.

This week is "National Blood Pressure Week." There will be a free blood pressure clinic at the Health Center from 8 to noon and Thursday.

So the pressure is on — get your pressure taken this week, and perform another death-defying act.



LAITY & CLERGY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

...urge the citizens of Eugene to support legislation which guarantees the constitutional rights of all persons regardless of sexual orientation. The purpose and effect of the ordinance passed by the Eugene City Council in October is neither to approve or condemn a particular lifestyle. Its function is to protect homosexual citizens from discrimination in the areas of housing, public accommodations, employment and contract compliance.

...Basic to both our religious heritage and our form of constitutional government is the clear affirmation that all persons shall have their human and civil rights ensured. We believe that this ordinance will protect homosexual persons from the consequences of uncontrolled prejudice and discrimination.

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