

HEALTH

Prevent High Blood Pressure With Easy Lifestyle Changes

By SPECIAL TO NNPA

High blood pressure: It's something you can't see, you can't feel and contributor to many serious illnesses, including stroke, and heart disease, which kills more African Americans than any other illness.

Also known as hypertension, high blood pressure is a particular problem among blacks. They get it twice as often as whites, develop it earlier and to a more severe degree. But black skin doesn't mean a guaranteed high blood pressure reading. There are steps you can take to prevent your blood pressure from rising.

What Is High Blood Pressure?
As your heart beats, it pushes blood through your arteries, which are blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to the rest of your body. Blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries.

Some things make your pressure go up. If you run to catch a bus or somebody makes you mad enough to scream, your blood pressure will shoot up. But it goes back to normal once the excitement has passed.

However, if the blood pressure

is consistently elevated, this can damage the body's vital organs, such as the heart, brain and kidneys -- and serious, life-threatening disease can develop.

Although the blood is pushing against the walls of the arteries with higher than-normal force in a hypertensive person, he or she probably can't tell that there's anything wrong.

If you have high blood pressure, you probably won't feel any differently or notice any changes when you look in the mirror. High blood pressure is a silent disease. That's why it's important for you to have your blood pressure checked at least once a year, or more often if you already know your pressure is high or have a family history of hypertension.

Having your blood pressure checked is quick, easy and painless. Many churches, health fairs and shopping malls offer blood pressure screenings. If you get checked at one of these places and your reading is high, be sure to get rechecked by a physician.

A blood pressure measurement is written like a fraction. For exam-

ple, a desirable blood pressure reading is 120/80; your health care practitioner will say "120 over 80." As your blood pressure rises, your chance of health problems increases. If your reading is 140/90 or more, you should see your doctor about treatment.

Keeping Blood Pressure In Check

High blood pressure is more common in older folks. Also, if your parents or grandparents have or had hypertension, the chances are greater that you will, too.

You can't control these factors. But there are greater that you will, too.

You can't control these factors. But there are other factors that you can control, to lower your chance of developing high blood pressure. Here's what do:

Control your weight. Being overweight can mean a two- to six-fold higher risk of developing high blood pressure. About 30 percent of hypertension in the United States is related to excess weight. If you need to reduce, try to lose one-half to one pound

per week. Choose fruits and vegetables over fatty foods more often to

reduce your calorie intake.

Increase physical activity. People who are physically active have a 20 to 50 percent lower risk of getting high blood pressure than those who are less active. Be more active every day by walking, taking the stairs (not the elevator), riding a bike, or playing a sport that raises your heart rate.

Use salt and sodium in moderation. Consume no more than 2,400 milligrams of sodium per day -- this includes what's in processed foods and added during cooking and at the table. Use spices, herbs, garlic, onion and lemon juice to flavor your food. Also read food labels to avoid "hidden" sodium found in processed and canned foods.

If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation -- no more than two drinks daily. About five to seven percent of hypertension in the United States can be attributed to the consumption of three or more alcoholic drinks a day. Remember, you have the power to stay healthy -- take advantage of it! (An infographic on preventing high-blood pressure is available. For more information call Paula Wheeler, 202-973-5868.)

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Change of Habits Can Help Prevent Yeast Infections

(NU) - The symptoms of vaginal yeast infection -- burning, itching, a white discharge -- are all too familiar to millions of women. Nearly 75 percent of all women will have a yeast infection at least once in their lifetimes and about 10 percent of sufferers will get five or more a year.

Technically known as candida albicans, yeast is a fungus that normally inhabits the vagina. Ordinarily, it is kept in check by bacteria and causes trouble only if it is allowed to overgrow. Often, the underlying cause is unknown, but anything that alters the body's natural chemistry increases the chances of triggering an infection. Once diagnosed by a physician, yeast infections are easily treatable with over-the-counter medications and the condition is seldom serious, but by adopting certain habits, it may be possible to avoid this uncomfortable affliction altogether.

Because the fungi flourish in dark, moist environments, constrictive, synthetic garments can create an ideal habitat for yeast to multiply. "Yeast likes to live in warm, sweaty places," says Dr. Ramona Slupik, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago. Slupik recommends women wear loose-fitting cotton clothing and 100 percent cotton underpants to permit air to circulate below the waist.

"Man-made fabrics don't provide adequate ventilation," explains Hal Brockmann Sr., vice president and managing director of research for Cotton Incorporated. "Due to its unique fiber structure, cotton breathes and helps remove body



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moisture by absorbing it and wicking it away from the skin."

In addition, Slupik advises that if you swim, don't sit for hours in a wet bathing suit. Shower and change immediately afterward. She also discourages the frequent use of douches or feminine hygiene sprays as these products tend to upset the body's pH level, destroying the "good" organisms that ward off infections.

For women prone to frequent bouts of yeast, a change of diet also may be of help. Some studies show that by eating yogurt daily (specifically varieties that contain active cultures) you can significantly reduce the number of yeast infections.

THE REAL REASONS TO STAY AWAY FROM MARIJUANA

By JOHN DUFF

As a parent and activist in the substance abuse prevention and treatment field I am deeply concerned about the resurgence in the popularity of marijuana. I am just as concerned with the difficulty parents, teachers, counselors and other adults are having in trying to communicate with teenagers why they should not use marijuana. There seems to be a consensus of agreement about the dangers of cocaine, heroin and even cigarettes and alcohol, but not marijuana. What are the real dangers with it and how do you handle responses such as; "marijuana is an herb," "it is harmless," "it is used as a medicine," or "it's organic." One famous rap group member feels it can make him more creative and that he can write and perform better.

What all drugs have in common is they each contain a poison molecule.

The poison molecule in coffee is caffeine, in tobacco it is nicotine and in alcohol it is ethanol. Cocaine is a poison molecule found in the coca

plant and morphine is a poison molecule found in the opium poppy. The poison molecule in marijuana is THC (delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol). It is the

THC in marijuana causing the high or enjoyable feelings being experienced as well as the problems. What are the real problems with pot?

Ambition: Here lies the greatest danger to our youth. It is so obvious yet often overlooked. Ambition is the very thing in which a person acquires his success in life.

A cigarette smoker loses his life to lung cancer while the alcoholic is constantly hungover and often looks and smells bad. The heroin addict is usually in disastrous physical health exposing himself to death from overdose as well as AIDS. What is obvious about the chronic smoker of marijuana? With chronic use all else become less important or secondary to the use of marijuana.

The ambition and personality of the chronic smoker of marijuana becomes altered as with all drugs. The loss of ambition is at the top of my list because this point is so important in

the life of a teenager as it can halt and/or alter emotional and educational development. Simply put, marijuana can interrupt a child's drive and development in sports, music, reading and school subjects, hobbies, etc. This result is seen over and over in drug treatment centers such as Narconon.

Memory: It has been stated in the past that marijuana use causes "short-term memory." It is more than this. Using marijuana as well as other drugs affects concentration, mental recording and the recalling of previously recorded mental images. All one has to do is spend some time with someone who has smoked pot and attempt to hold a serious discussion on a serious or complex subject. It will become all too obvious that marijuana affects the memory. Where the breakdown comes into play is in the area of his or her "attention." Drugs internalize or "interiorize" one's attention as one is feeling and enjoying the drugs' effect on the body. Without proper attention,

a good memory does not occur in the first place and makes recalling what you did record mentally more difficult.

Education: Individuals, especially teenagers, consuming marijuana with any regularity are going to have problems educating themselves either inside or outside of the classroom. The mind is your computer and it depends on attention, concentration, recording, recalling and memory. Grades and performance usually drop with the regular use of marijuana. Again, we see here the deadening of ambition. Those that succeed in life do it with ambition. To educate oneself takes ambition.

Unfortunately, many teenagers do not understand the value of educating themselves early in life. Many teenagers do not know how to study, or have problems studying, making education more difficult. While you as an adult can see the damage that marijuana can do to the education process, it is difficult for many teenagers to understand the importance of educating oneself.

To be continued next week.

Bitter Cold Stresses Animals

Cold, windy and icy conditions are hazardous for animals too. While people are taking precautions to keep their homes warm, the family pet needs to be considered as well. Low temperatures have locked up water that might not normally be frozen and the east wind has been relentless.

Animals living outdoors are particularly at risk during cold weather. Outside pets need protection from wind, rain and the cold. Pets need more food and water during cold weather. Extra food gives them the calories they need to keep warm. Cold, dry air increases their need for water. Watch that water bowls are not frozen. Bring pets in during

weather extremes. A garage or laundry room, carefully checked for poisonous substances such as

anti-freeze, can provide temporary shelter for animals not used to being indoors.

PDC
PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING
Date: January 18, 1995
Place: Portland Building
1120 SW 5th Avenue
Second Floor
Time: 6:00 p.m.

Commission meetings are open to the public. A complete agenda is available at PDC or by calling 823-3200. Citizens with disabilities may call 823-3232 or TDD 823-6868 for assistance at least 48 hours in advance.

PDC is the City of Portland's urban renewal, housing and economic development agency.

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North Portland
Northminster Presbyterian: 2823 N. Portland Blvd., Fellowship Hall, Tues., 7:00 p.m.
University of Portland: 5000 N. Willamette Blvd., Columbia Hall (Enter from Portsmouth), Wed. 4:45 p.m.

Northwest Portland
ESCO: 2141 N. W. 25th Avenue (25th & Vaughn), Lab Bldg., 2nd Floor, Auditorium, Thurs. 12:00 Noon

Northeast Portland
Tillamook Park Bldg: 2108 1/2 E. 41st Ave., Mon-7:00 p.m.; Tues-7:00 p.m.; Wed-9:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; Thurs-7:00 p.m.; Fri-9:30 a.m.
Temple Baptist Church: 1319 N. 7th, Fireside Room, Tues. 12:00 Noon

Call Collect - Weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
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