

You Can Live With High Blood Pressure

One Warm Springs tribal member has died from high blood pressure, another is blind. It is estimated that one in every six Americans has high blood pressure. But high blood pressure can be controlled by taking medication as prescribed, every day, thus reducing the chance of death or disability.

Efforts to achieve good health and a longer life reflect a current trend among Americans today. People are exercising more, improving their eating habits, and giving up smoking. As a result, they feel better and are helping themselves to a healthier life.

For some persons, one way to achieve a long and healthy life is to take medication regularly. That's one of the things a doctor might prescribe if a patient has high blood pressure. When high blood pressure is not detected and treated, it makes a person especially susceptible to a stroke, heart disease, kidney disease or other disabilities. If it is controlled, a person's life span is increased.

Treatment on a daily basis, often with medication, sometimes by diet - usually for the rest of their lives - is what's

required for people with high blood pressure. There is usually no cure for the disease. But, medication is only effective each day it's taken. If patients do not understand this aspect of the treatment regimen, they may think that a lowered blood pressure means it's been cured. That's not true. If they stop taking medication, their blood pressure will probably go back up again. High blood pressure must be treated one day at a time, every day.

In addition to medication, physicians often advise patients with high blood pressure to stop smoking, lose weight, reduce salt in their diet, and exercise more. This is good advice because it helps the medication work more effectively. If medication has been prescribed, the other measures usually can't control blood pressure by themselves. Sometimes patients make a mistake and choose to stop smoking or lose weight instead of taking their medication. That's a serious mistake - they should do all the things the doctor tells them, not just one or two.

Some diseases have obvious symptoms, such as a cough or a rash that can be treated. High

blood pressure is not like that - it usually has no symptoms. But, some people think they should "feel" something, such as a headache or dizziness before they take their medication. They're wrong. They should take it every day even though they don't have symptoms.

People often think that high blood pressure is related to being nervous or tense. They are probably confusing hypertension, the medical term for high blood pressure, with nervous tension. The fact is, nervous people, as well as calm people, can have high blood pressure. The only way to know if someone's blood pressure is up is to measure it and to help their patients, the clinic staff requires that each person three years of age or older have their blood pressure taken every time they visit the clinic. No one can tell just by the way he or she feels.

People who are treating their high blood pressure every day, the way the doctor advises, have joined the trend to better health among Americans. They are avoiding potential disabilities and are leading normal, full lives, even though they are under daily treatment.



Bernadine Anderson gets her blood pressure checked.



Pam Kelly - New RN at PHS Clinic

Kelly Gets to Warm Springs

by Donna Behrend

There's a friendly new face at the Public Health Clinic these days. It's that of Pam Kelly - or "Kelly" as she prefers to be called. She has filled the nurse's position recently vacated by Delphine Wood. "I've been wanting to come to Warm Springs since 1977, but there were no openings until now," says Kelly.

Kelly and her husband, Michael, who is an artist, just recently moved here from the Eastern Navajo Agency in New Mexico. They are both avid horse

people, enjoying riding their