

Your blood pressure speaks volumes-Are you listening?

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High blood pressure, otherwise known as hypertension, is the leading risk for death in North America according to World Health Organization statistics as of 2002. In 2007, the Canadian Hypertension Education Program (CHEP) reported that 5.7 million Canadians had been diagnosed with hypertension and just over 5 million were on pharmacotherapy. Unlike many other illnesses, high blood pressure can slowly, and silently, damage essential organs necessary for life, hence its nickname, “the silent killer.” Each year, this silent killer will be responsible for, or contribute to, “cerebrovascular disease, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, renal failure, peripheral vascular disease, dementia, and atria fibrillation.

In the spring of 2011 the Saskatoon Community Clinic held blood pressure screening clinics for clinic patients, members, and the general public. The purpose of these sessions was to raise awareness of the importance of knowing and managing one’s blood pressure as a means for achieving optimal health and well-being.

What is a healthy blood pressure?

The following numbers represent normal to high blood pressures.

Normal: 120/80 – 130/85

High Normal: 130/85 – 139/89

High: 140/90

It is important to remember that it is normal for your blood pressure to fluctuate throughout the day and with activity. Therefore, it is recommended that you sit quietly for 5-10 minutes before taking your blood pressure. This will provide you with the most accurate reading. It is also helpful to chart your blood pressures and to bring your recordings with you when you visit your doctor or nurse practitioner.

Steps to Managing your Blood Pressure:

- **Know your blood pressure.**
 - Attend a future blood pressure clinic.
 - Monitor your blood pressure at home.
 - Ask to have your blood pressure taken at your next doctor's appointment.

- **Adopt healthy eating.**
 - Follow the Canada Food Guide
 - Bake, broil or barbecue meals.
 - Add fish, fibre and fruit to your daily diet.
 - Eliminate salt from your diet and use seasoning or other spices to add pizzazz to your meals.
 - Eliminate or reduce saturated fats and trans fats from your diet.
 - Drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day.
 - Maintain a healthy body weight.

- **Get Active.**
 - Include 30 minutes of exercise into your daily routine.

- **Quit Smoking**

- **Attend: A Saskatoon Community Clinic-Education Session**
 - Diabetes education session
 - Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (2 hours)
 - Sailing Along with Healthy Vessels (90 minutes)

- **Book your own personal consultation:**
 - Physiotherapist

- Dietician
- Doctor/Nurse Practitioner/Registered Nurse

- **Visit: Canadian Hypertension Education Program (CHEP)**
 - Public Recommendations: **www.hypertension.ca**

References

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