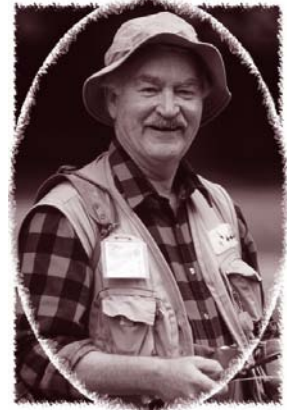


*Control your
Blood Pressure
For Life!*

Blood Pressure Talking Points

High blood pressure is on the rise in the United States.

High blood pressure is up 30% in last 10 years. An estimated 65 million Americans now have high blood pressure, nearly one-third of all adults. An analysis by Milliman Consultants and Actuaries found that treatment of the 19 million Medicare patients with uncontrolled high blood pressure would result in 115,000 fewer cases of strokes and 106,000 fewer heart attacks. This would save 77,000 lives! If your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher, get help from your doctor! If you have pre-hypertension (120/80 to 139/89) make lifestyle changes now to prevent serious health problems down the road. If you don't know what your blood pressure is, get it checked! High blood pressure kills! *Reuters news release, Sept. 14, 2004*



**Take Heart
Alaska**

Myths about High Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Disease

- **High blood pressure and heart disease are a natural part of aging.**
Although high blood pressure and heart disease are more common among older people, they are not an inevitable part of growing older. These health problems can be prevented by modifying one's lifestyle before they develop. Being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, and eating a diet that is low in saturated fat and sodium can help prevent high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, and other disorders that subsequently lead to heart disease.

Another important step to maintaining lifelong cardiovascular health is to have regular screening for these diseases, and if they develop, to work with your physician to adhere to a proper treatment plan. Blood cholesterol levels can be reduced, and high blood pressure and diabetes can be controlled.

- **Medicines for high blood pressure only make you feel worse.**
There are a number of medications that are effective in controlling high blood pressure. If one medication makes you feel bad, you should go back to your doctor so that he or she can adjust your dosage or prescribe another medication. Also, some medications produce initial side effects that diminish with use. Always communicate honestly with your physician and do not adjust or stop your medications on your own. Remember that even though high blood pressure may have few symptoms itself, uncontrolled high blood pressure results in stroke, heart attack, and heart failure.
- **High blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke are less of a risk than cancer or AIDS.**
Coronary heart disease kills more Americans each year than any other disease, including all forms of cancer and AIDS. In 1993, cardiovascular disease claimed 954,138 lives, accounting for more than 42 percent of all deaths. In comparison, 530,870 people died of cancer and 38,500 died of AIDS.

- **When blood pressure becomes lower, it is not necessary to continue taking the medication.**
Blood pressure medications control but do not cure hypertension. Therefore, most people must continue to take the medications over the long term. Sometimes improvements in diet, weight, and activity level, stopping smoking, or other lifestyle changes will permit the doctor to adjust the medication level.
- **If a heart attack is not fatal, you'll eventually recover completely.**
Having a heart attack increases the chance of death or illness two to nine times. About two-thirds of heart attack patients do not make a complete recovery; however, about 88 percent under the age of 65 can return to their normal work. It is important to be aware that having a heart attack increases your risks of a second heart attack, angina, heart failure, and stroke.
- **Hypertension is a type of blood pressure that is caused by tension or stress.**
Stress is a contributing factor to hypertension/high blood pressure, but the two are the same disease. High blood pressure is just a more common name for this condition.

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