Controlling High Blood Pressure

As Americans get older, high blood pressure is more common. This is not true in other countries. Why? One reason is that we tend to get overweight as we age. We also become less active. Plus American food is often high in sodium.

Are we doomed to suffer the consequences of high blood pressure? The answer is NO! Doctors often put people immediately on medication without trying lifestyle changes first. No one has gotten to be older today without discipline and hard work. Applying that same determination to changing eating and activity habits can have positive effects on your blood pressure.

What do you need to do? First, with your doctor’s permission, get more active. This doesn’t mean joining a high impact aerobics class. It merely means walking more, gardening more, biking more - just sitting less. Most research has found that 30 minutes or more of vigorous activity five or more days a week can make a big difference in fitness and weight control. Work up to 30 minutes gradually, and if you need to, divide it into 10-minute activity breaks several times during the day.

Next, look at how you eat. Are you fond of high fat, salty snacks and restaurant foods? Switch to fruit for snacks. Eat more fresh food at home prepared simply. Buy a cookbook that features recipes that are low in fat and sodium. Use an herb shaker instead of the salt shaker. If you make small changes over time, in a year you will be a new person.

A new study found that people who eat eight servings of fruits and vegetables a day along with a low fat diet, have lower blood pressures. A serving is only a ½ cup of vegetables or a small piece of fruit. If you slowly add more fruits and vegetables...
to your diet, you will not only have lower blood pressure but less constipation. Cancer risk may also go down.

**Low Sodium Tomato Sauce**

1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
1 16-ounce can unsalted canned tomatoes
½ cup water
1 teaspoon dehydrated onion
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon dried basil
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons sugar or 1 packet artificial sweetener (optional)

Place mushrooms in baking dish with lid. Microwave on high for 2 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except sweetener. Chop up tomatoes into chunks. Mix all ingredients together well. Microwave again on high for four minutes or until very hot. Stir and continue microwaving on medium for 5 minutes more. Stir occasionally. Add sweetener if desired and stir. Serve immediately on pasta or freeze for later use in small portions. (Can add cooked meat or poultry as desired)

Serves 4 (1 cup servings)

**Nutrition Information:**

- Calories: 44
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams
- Protein: 2 grams
- Sodium: 19 milligrams
- Fat: 0 grams

**Diabetic Exchanges:** 2 vegetables

**Your Resources**

**Are There Leaks In Your Spending Plan?**

A spending plan helps keep track of income and outgo. When
there is more outgo than income, plugging cash-flow leaks can improve your financial situation. There are two types of leaks that drain people’s money away: unplanned spending and sales traps.

Use the following checklist to check cash-flow leaks you want to plug.

____ I tend to buy clothing, household items, or gifts on impulse.
____ When I use credit cards, I tend to spend more than I would if using cash
____ I pay interest on my credit card purchases.
____ When I need groceries, I just go to the store and buy them. I seldom plan my week’s shopping or make a list.
____ I rarely compare prices or shop around for the best buy on large purchases
____ I don’t use Consumer Reports or other consumer research to compare products.
____ I don’t bother with “cents off” coupons or pay attention to sales.
____ I give freely when charities or my children ask for money, then scrimp to pay my bills.
____ I hate to cook, so I eat out a lot.
____ Other ____________________

Avoid Sales Sharks

• Be wary of fabulous deals. Telephone solicitors may try to sell risky investments. Such salespeople tell you this is your last chance for such a deal. Don’t be sold. Any deal that sounds too good to be true probably is.

• Be wary of mail-order advertisements. Some may not live up to details shown, and it may be very difficult or impossible to get your money back or make an exchange.

• Don’t give your credit card number to a telephone solicitor. He or she could charge up a storm on your card before anyone detects the fraud. Charge by telephone only when you initiate the call. Always check your statements to see that the charges are accurate.
• Be wary of financial planners, stockbrokers, or insurance agents who try to talk you into buying an investment or insurance policy. Remember that they usually earn their living by selling products. Say, “I’ll think about it,” and do just that. If they pressure you, tell them you don’t feel comfortable with their approach and would prefer to do business with someone else.

Plugging unplanned spending and avoiding sales sharks can improve cash flow.

References: Where Are The Leaks? A Money Management Workbook, AARP

Your Relationships

Working and Caregiving: Is There a Balance?

Due to healthier older adults, an increasing number of senior caregivers with other jobs, the rising number of seniors in the workplace, and accelerating costs of services, businesses are being pushed into facing elder care issues among their employees. Significant demographic and social factors are placing a sense of urgency on employers to address the issue of caregiving employees. Caregivers report having trouble balancing work and caregiving responsibilities.

Multiple role demands often take their toll on work-related responsibilities. Some of the effects on employment and trying to find a balance are absenteeism, tardiness, work interruptions, missed advancement opportunities, and increased job stress. Other consequences that might affect your work are physical fatigue, depression, decreased quality of care, interruptions during the work day related to the caregiving role, emotional upsets, and taking time off.

Employers can help relieve some of that role strain by providing their caregiving employees with work alternatives. When businesses create
policies that respond to the caregiver employee’s need, there is the potential for all parties to benefit:

- Employees’ health and well-being are preserved.
- Employers profit from the continuing productivity of the employee and lower employee utilization for health care and other benefits.
- The dependent, for whom the caregiver is caring, receives better quality care.

Employers working to address the issues involved with caregiving need to understand the concepts of aging and elder care. Broadening their understanding in those areas will help identify the needs of their caregiving employees.

Many businesses that have taken action on these issues are offering a variety of benefits to employees. Some of these benefits include:

- Family illness leave
- Flexible work hours
- Long term care insurance
- Elder care resource guides
- Employee leave bank
- Deficit leave
- Opportunities for support groups
- On-site adult day care
- Employee Assistance Program
- Elder care workshops
- Educational programs
- Resource library
- Work at home options
- Exchanging sick leave for caregiver time

Job flexibility was found by employers and caregivers to be associated with a decrease in work interference and assisted caregivers in handling daytime emergencies. Employers and caregivers found that job performance and satisfaction increased, and lateness and job turnover decreased.

The benefits to businesses, employees, and care recipients are becoming more evident. Many employers have begun to take an active role in offering assistance to employees to help them manage the demands of multiple roles.

Dear Friend:

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Extension Service office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians.

Please contact your local Extension Service office for more information on these and related topics.

Contributors to this issue:
Connie Crawley, MS, RD, Extension Nutrition and Health Specialist
Esther Maddux, Ph.D., CFP, Extension Financial Management Specialist
Don Bower, DPA, CFCS, Extension Human Development Specialist

www.fcs.uga.edu/outreach/pubs/pubs.html