



Uncontrolled high blood pressure is cutting into heart disease progress

An uptick in deaths due to uncontrolled high blood pressure is slowing the progress in the fight against heart disease, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Deaths from heart disease overall have decreased in the past two decades, but the rate of that decline has slowed since 2010, the study found.

In addition to rising rates of deaths related to high blood pressure, rates of heart disease deaths linked to obesity and Type 2 diabetes once declining have leveled off.

The findings are worrying, especially given the recent medical and surgical advances in treating heart disease.

"The fact that we are not seeing that translate into improvement in death rates is concerning," study author Dr. Sadiya Khan, a cardiologist at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, said. Khan and her colleagues searched a public Centers for Disease Control and Prevention database for death certificates from 1999 to 2017.

Death certificates don't indicate what led to the ultimate cause of death for example, a person's cause of death may have been a heart attack, but the heart attack could have been caused in part by high blood pressure.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure, both chronic and acute, can contribute to a person's death in a number of ways. "Hypertension that is really out of control could lead to a tear in a blood vessel," said Dr. Deepak Bhatt, executive director of interventional cardiovascular programs at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

"It could also lead to swelling in the brain, heart attack, stroke, and contribute to heart failure and kidney failure," Bhatt, who was not involved in the current study, said.

Other factors that could lead to heart disease deaths have also become more widespread in the past two decades, including obesity and Type 2 diabetes, Khan said.

The conditions are strongly linked and both are major risk factors for heart disease.

More than 93 million U.S. adults are considered obese, according to the CDC, and almost as many – 84 million – have prediabetes. An additional 30 million Americans have Type 2 diabetes.

We've noticed the leading edge of an emerging re-epidemic.

"Although we have celebrated significant declines in heart disease deaths and stroke over the last several decades, what we've noticed is the leading edge of an emerging re-epidemic," Dr. Laurence Sperling, director of the Emory Heart Disease Prevention Center in Atlanta, said.

Indeed, heart disease remains the nation's No. 1 killer of both men and women claiming more than 800,000 American lives each year, according to the American Heart Association.

Sperling, who was not involved with this latest study, said the research should serve as a wake-up call.

How much water does your body need?

"On average, we recommend that men get 15 cups of fluid per day and women get 11 cups per day," says Heather Mangieri, a registered dietitian and author of "Fueling Young Athletes." People who exercise regularly or spend time in the sun need even more water than the standard recommendations. The bad news is that more than 43% of adults don't drink enough water, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – hence why alternatives are helpful.

What Fruits & Veggies are high in water?

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| ◆ Cucumbers (96% water) | Lettuce (96% water) |
| ◆ Celery (95%) | Radishes (95%) |
| ◆ Tomatoes (94%) | Cauliflower (92%) |
| ◆ Bell Peppers (92%) | Spinach (92%) |
| ◆ Strawberries (92%) | Watermelon (92%) |
| ◆ Cantaloupe (90%) | Peaches (88%) |
| ◆ Pineapples (87%) | Oranges (87%) |

Get Flu Vaccine Now

Cases of flu tend to increase as temperatures decrease. According to the CDC, people should get their flu shots as soon as they are available.

Most 2019-2020 shots have been available since August. Most flu outbreaks happen in February and March.

The influenza vaccine takes two weeks to incubate and build antibodies. When it does kick in, the vaccine will last six months.

Upcoming Meeting Speakers

October 15, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Our Speaker is Lisa Wegley, Engagement Lead - Blue Zones Project

"Live Well"

November 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Our Speaker is Bill Proulx, YMCA Executive Director of Operations

"Health Benefits of the YMCA"

December 17, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

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How to Stay Hydrated Besides Drinking Water for when you want more than just H2O

As temperatures soar, so does the risk of becoming dehydrated. "Your fluid needs will go up in the summer and in the hot weather," says Torey Armul, a registered dietitian nutritionist in Columbus, Ohio, and a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Hydration helps with everything from keeping your core body temperature consistent to moving nutrients throughout the body. "It really is a cornerstone for good health," Armul says.

Here are some great ways to stay hydrated in addition to drinking water:

- **Eat your vegetables:** Twenty percent of your daily water intake is derived from food, according to the National Institutes of Health. "Fruit and vegetables are especially high in water content," Mangieri says. You can keep your body hydrated by consuming fruits and veggies that contain 85 percent or more water.
- **Take advantage of summer fruit:** Summer farmers markets are overflowing with fruits high in water. But don't go overboard – while fruits are great sources of water, they're also high in sugar and can contain unwanted calories if you eat too many.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol in excess:** The more alcohol you ingest, the more your body will become dehydrated. "Alcohol can decrease the production of the anti-diuretic hormone, the hormone that helps the body reabsorb water," Mangieri says. This increases urination, causes the body to lose more fluid than normal and creates symptoms such as dry mouth, thirst and headaches. Want to combat dehydration while drinking alcohol? For every alcoholic beverage you consume, have a glass of water or a drink high in electrolytes, like coconut water or a sports drink.
- **Make a cold soup:** Look for broth-based soups for the most hydrating bang for your buck and bonus points if you add fruit or veggies with high water content, such as tomatoes, celery or radishes. Gazpacho – a traditionally cold Spanish soup – is perfect to beat the heat in the summer and can be made in various flavors, from watermelon to cucumber.
- **Start your day with oatmeal:** Oatmeal is a heart-healthy breakfast option that can help you defeat dehydration. When you make a bowl of oatmeal, the oats absorb the water or milk you used to cook it, making your savory breakfast a surprising source of hydration. If you add fresh fruit such as strawberries or blueberries, a bowl of oatmeal ends up having about the same water content as a cucumber. Oatmeal is also a great source of fiber and can help lower cholesterol levels, according to the National Institutes of Health.



Medications can contribute to dry mouth

In the fall or spring, if you take antihistamines to combat seasonal allergies, you may find yourself with an annoying side effect: Dry mouth.

But, it isn't just antihistamines. Hundreds of medications cause dry mouth including pills for blood pressure, pain, muscle relaxants, anxiety, depression and simple decongestants. Also, health conditions, including diabetes, or treatments such as cancer radiation therapy can cause the condition.

Symptoms of dry mouth include severely painful dry tongue, choking, sore throat, and hoarseness. It can change the taste of food, cause bad breath, and affect teeth and gums.

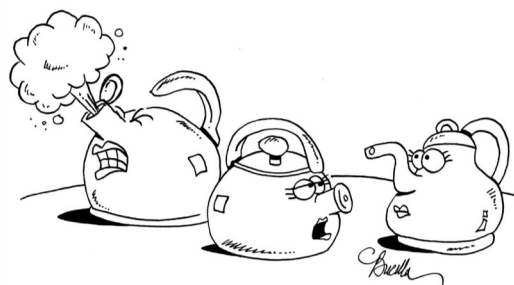
You can get relief through some prescription medications. However, home care can help.

- Use a humidifier at night.
- Try sugar-free gum.
- Sip water frequently.
- Avoid sugar, acidic foods, caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Switch medications with your doctor's help.

Many dry mouth over-the-counter symptom relievers are available, including special mouthwash that does not contain alcohol. Dry mouth sprays can be helpful at night, but if they don't seem to have staying power, try the gels.

Low-carb diet affects hydration

Carbohydrates (especially whole grains) store water and if you eliminate carbs and grains, you may need more water. One important consideration for low-carb dieters: salt. Sodium helps maintain fluid balance in the body. Low-carb dieters eliminate salty processed food and may need more sodium. In addition, low-carb diets are low insulin diets. When insulin levels are low, the body flushes out more sodium, according to physiology.org. Salt or electrolyte tablets can be an option if hydration is a problem.



"Nothing worse than a hot flash when you're retaining water."

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For healthy blood pressure, both numbers matter

The bottom number in a blood pressure reading (the diastolic pressure) has sometimes played second fiddle to the top number (systolic) in clinical settings, but new research confirms that both numbers are important in determining a person's heart disease risk.

The study, from researchers at Kaiser Permanente in California, was published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

"Although systolic does count for a little bit more in terms of the risk of heart attack and stroke, diastolic high blood pressure is a close second, and it's an independent predictor of those risks," said lead author Dr. Alexander Flint, a stroke specialist with Kaiser Permanente.

A high diastolic number "really should not be ignored," he added. "We should not declare victory just because one number is under control. We need to pay attention to both."

Systolic refers to the amount of pressure in a person's arteries, when the heart squeezes and sends blood throughout the body. Diastolic is the pressure in the arteries between heart beats.

The study analyzed more than 36 million blood pressure readings from 1.3 million adults. All were members of Kaiser Permanente in Northern California. Most were white; just 7.5 percent were black.

"Recognizing that the diastolic blood pressure also has to be controlled because it can increase risk for stroke is a good step forward in our management for blood pressure," said Dr. Nieca Goldberg, a cardiologist at NYU Langone Medical Center and medical director of the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health, who was not involved with the research.

Over the past decade, mounting evidence has shown that when patients can get their blood pressure down to levels below what was previously considered "normal," they greatly reduced their risk for heart attack and stroke.

In 2017, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology updated their guidelines for optimal blood pressure. Anyone with a measurement over 130/80 mmHg is considered to have hypertension.

Neither Goldberg nor other outside heart experts were surprised by the findings.

"This is something I've believed for years, that we should treat both systolic and diastolic blood pressure," Dr. Angela Brown, an associate professor of medicine and clinical hypertension specialist at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, wrote in an email to NBC News.

Brown also emphasized that younger people often have higher diastolic readings than systolic readings, such as 130/100mm Hg, compared with older people whose systolic readings may be higher, such as 170/80 mmHg.

Both systolic and diastolic hypertension can be treated with the same kinds of medications, but some doctors may need to switch the medicines or doses to get patients below that 130/80 mmHg mark.

"Everybody's reaction to medication is different, so it really has to be individually tailored," Flint said.

Lifestyle factors are perhaps the biggest driver of hypertension. The American Heart Association recommends several ways to lower your blood pressure and keep it in a healthy range. Those include:

- eating a well-balanced diet that's low in salt.
- limiting alcohol to two drinks a day for men, one for women.
- exercising about 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- quitting smoking.
- losing weight if your body mass index is over 25.



Mended Hearts

Mended Hearts is a non-profit support and continuing-education group open to all heart patients and their families/caregivers. Attendance at our monthly meetings is gratis and your membership support is invited. Please feel free to pass on this newsletter to someone you know who has been affected in some way by heart disease.

Want to help others that have had or are having a heart event experience? There is nothing better than being a Mended Hearts visitor and seeing the joy in the face of a patient or receiving the gratitude of a patient when you visit them. To find out what's involved in being a visitor, call Arron Yaras at (831) 262-4068 or email at amyprint2@att.net



Emergency Tip:

Get the victim outside

When you have to call for emergency help, do what you can to get the victim outside to meet the EMTs – or find an accessible location.

In a public place such as a restaurant, go outside immediately. Never go into the bathroom. It makes it much more difficult for EMTs to get in, navigate the restaurant, and find the person in need.

At home, if possible, put pets outside. If the EMTs have to fight off a barking dog, this only delays treatment.

Chunky Artichoke-y Salad

- 3 package frozen artichoke hearts (thawed)
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice (from about 1 lemon)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons no-sodium Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 cups finely sliced basil leaves
- 2 Tbsp chopped black olives
- 1/4 cup sliced red onion
- 1 seeded, chopped red bell pepper
- 1 medium tomato (chopped)



Prepare the artichoke hearts: Add artichoke hearts to a heavy-duty medium pot with 3 cups water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cover, reduce heat to medium-high, and let artichokes simmer until fully cooked and warm, about 5 minutes. Drain artichokes in a colander and run cold water over them to cool. Drain very thoroughly. Meanwhile, in a large serving bowl, add oil, lemon juice, Italian seasoning, mustard, salt, and pepper. Whisk together with a fork.

Into the bowl, add artichoke hearts into the dressing. Stir to combine.

Add remaining ingredients into the bowl: sliced basil leaves, chopped olives, onion, chopped bell pepper, and chopped tomato. Stir together to combine. Serve immediately or chill in the refrigerator for a few hours and serve.

Preventing AFib strokes

Atrial Fibrillation, or AFib, is a leading risk factor for stroke.

According to the National Stroke Association, the irregular or rapid heartbeat is often caused when the two upper chambers of the heart beat unpredictably and sometimes rapidly; these irregular heartbeats cause blood to collect in the heart and potentially form a clot, which can travel to the brain and cause a stroke.

The bad news: about 15 percent of people who have strokes also have AFib, and folks with AFib have a five times greater chance of stroke. The really good news: up to 80 percent of strokes in people can be prevented.

The National Stroke Association offers tips for people to manage their anxiety and tips for stroke prevention. These include:

- The use of proper medication to manage AFib. These are used to restore the regular rhythms of the heart.
- Treatment aimed at preventing blood clots may also include blood thinners, or anticoagulants. This can be tricky and of course involves discussion with a health care provider.
- Schedule relaxation time. Stress and fatigue increase the risk for AFib, and downtime is a good idea for anybody.
- Exercise ~ if allowed by your doctor.



Get more fiber for better health

Fiber is good for your body, helping to lower cholesterol, keeping you regular, and even aiding in weight loss.

Soluble fiber in food like oats, peas, beans, and fruit, helps lower cholesterol.

Insoluble fiber, found in wheat bran, flour, potatoes and vegetables like cauliflower, helps to move food through your digestive system.

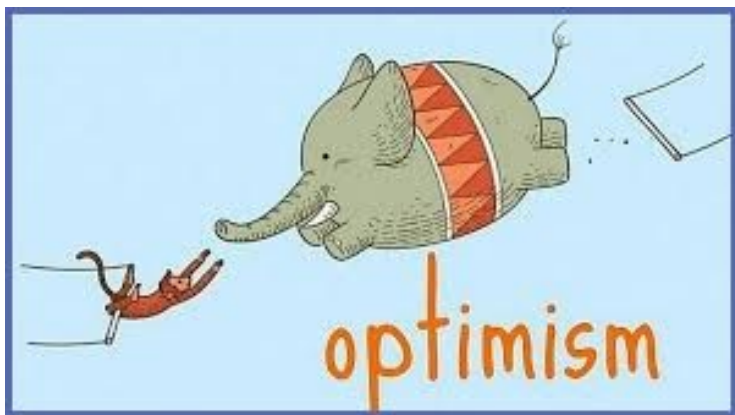
Fiber also does things you don't regularly talk about such as reducing the risk of constipation, hemorrhoids and diverticulosis.

Most Americans get only 15 grams of fiber a day instead of the 19 recommended for women and 38 for men. If you're 51 or over, it's 21 grams for women and 30 grams for men.

Adding fiber to a healthy diet may give you increased protection against diabetes, heart disease, and even lower the incidence of kidney stones.

When you add fiber, you also need to add water, since fiber soaks up liquids.

- Fruits and nuts provide a gram or two per serving, but the Mayo Clinic says pears, apples, raspberries, bananas and oranges have 3 to 5 grams.
- Among vegetables, you will get 4 to 5 grams from just a half cup of green beans, squash, baked beans or sweet potatoes.
- Some common cereals are good choices. Two shredded wheat biscuits, for example, have 5.5 grams, and a cup of Post Raisin Bran has 7.1 grams.
- Other cereals made for fiber:
- Kellogg's All-Bran Buds, 1/3 cup, 11 grams.
- General Mills Fiber One, 1/2 cup, 4.2 grams
- Post 100% Bran, 1/3 cup, 8.3 grams
- Kashi GoLean, 1 cup, 10.2 grams
- General Mills Fiber One (1 bar), 9.0 grams
- For a snack: 3 cups of popcorn has 3.3 grams.



Optimism has a surprising benefit: Better heart health, study finds

Looking on the bright side is more than a tool for taking life's ups and downs in stride. An optimistic outlook is also good for your health, according to new research.

"Thought patterns and mindsets are the most intimate parts of our experience," said Dr. Alan Rozanski, lead author of a meta-analysis on optimism that was published Friday in the journal JAMA Network Open. "We have known for a few decades now that there's a relationship between psychological factors and heart disease."

The new meta-analysis, which examined 15 studies on optimism and health and utilized data from 229,391 individuals, found that a person's tendency to think positively about the future was linked with a 35% lower risk for heart disease, and a lower risk of death.

But rote directives to "be more optimistic" seem unlikely to shift the worldviews of hardened pessimists.

Instead, Rozanski, who is also a cardiologist at Mount Sinai St. Luke's in New York, thinks a better application of the new optimism research might be to offer pessimism treatment as part of cardiac rehab programs.

People who have recently had heart attacks are eager to live healthier lives and are already making lifestyle changes, like improving their diets and exercising more, explained Rozanski, who has experience working with heart attack patients in such programs.

And while pessimism treatment is a novel idea, Rozanski thinks mental health should be part of post-heart attack regimens in the future.

"Thinking of this as a medical issue is new," he said.

More broadly, he thinks pessimism should raise concerns for doctors who might already be screening for more serious mental health conditions, like depression.

While depression itself carries numerous health burdens and complications, including weight gain, heart disease, substance use disorders and risk for suicide, according to the Mayo Clinic, Rozanski stressed that we have clear approaches for treating depression.

"Just like we can treat depression, we can treat [pessimism] at an earlier stage," he said.

Black Berry Cobbler

Servings: 8

Serving Size: 1/8 slice

- Cooking spray
- 4 cups blackberries
- 1/4 cup sugar substitute and 1/2 cup sugar substitute, divided use
- 1/4 cup water
- Juice from 1 medium lime
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/16 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cups fat-free milk
- 1/4 cup canola or corn oil
- 1/4 cup fat-free, plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Directions
- Tip: Click on step to mark as complete.



Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan with cooking spray. In a medium bowl, gently stir together the berries, 1/4 cup sugar substitute, the water, lime juice, and ginger. Let the berry mixture stand for at least 15 minutes so the juices can accumulate.

In a small bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, salt, and the remaining 1/2 cup sugar substitute. In a large bowl, whisk together the milk, oil, yogurt, and vanilla.

Add the flour mixture to the milk mixture, stirring just until no flour is visible. Don't overmix. Pour the batter into the baking pan. Using a spatula, spread the batter in the pan. (The batter doesn't have to touch the edge of the pan; it will spread while baking.) Top with the berry mixture.

Bake for 50 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.





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