



Cardiovascular health and hypertension among African Americans

Purpose of the study

High blood pressure is a chronic condition that causes heart disease, heart failure, stroke, and kidney disease. High blood pressure can be controlled by having a healthy body weight, eating healthy, being active, and taking medications.

Researchers in the Jackson Heart Study (JHS) wanted to see if the development of high blood pressure may be prevented or delayed in African Americans who have 1 or more of 7 positive health factors (normal blood pressure, normal blood sugar, normal cholesterol) and lifestyle behaviors (normal body weight, eating a healthy diet, regular exercise, not smoking cigarettes).

Major findings

In the JHS, more than one in two men and women developed high blood pressure between the first and third exam visits. Few participants had more than 5 of the health factors and lifestyle behaviors in the first exam. Participants with a higher number of the positive health factors and lifestyle behaviors had a lower chance of getting high blood pressure.

Take away message

The more steps you take the better your chances are in preventing or delaying getting high blood pressure. You can take one or more of the following 7 steps to prevent or delay getting high blood pressure:

Eat healthy. Eat more fruits, vegetables, lean meats or seafood, and nuts without salt. Eat less fats, added sugars, and salt.

Get active. Get more exercise, like brisk walking - 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

Stop smoking. Tobacco quitline 1-800-QUITNOW

Lose weight or keep a healthy weight. Lose around 5% to 7% of your bodyweight, 10 to 14 pounds for a 200 pound person. (www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html)

Control cholesterol.

Lower blood sugar.

Manage blood pressure.

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