



# SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH



## Decongestants Pose Potential Risk To High Blood Pressure Sufferers

(NAPSA)—Taking an over-the-counter (OTC) cold and flu remedy poses little risk for most people, but for the 65 million Americans with high blood pressure this may not be true. According to the American Heart Association, people with high blood pressure should be aware that the use of decongestants may raise blood pressure. This makes it particularly important that high blood pressure sufferers choose OTC medications wisely this season. Of those people with high blood pressure, nearly one in three, or 20 million, are unaware of their condition.

“The link between high blood pressure and decongestants has taken on new urgency this year as many Americans are concerned about contracting and treating cold and flu viruses, particularly those who were unable to get a flu vaccination as a result of the shortage,” said Roger S. Blumenthal, M.D., Director of the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease and Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology, at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. “Since patients tend to choose OTC medications without the assistance of their physician or pharmacist, those patients with hypertension need to understand the importance of selecting a medication that does not contain a nasal decongestant.”

The U.S. population experiences up to one billion colds annually, with the average adult suffering through two to four colds per

### High Blood Pressure Health Checklist

OTC Medications to discuss with your doctor or pharmacist before taking if you suffer from high blood pressure.

#### ▼ Nasal Decongestants—

Examples are: tablets, syrups or nasal sprays containing pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine, oxymetazoline.

#### ▼ Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs

(may negatively affect the management of high blood pressure if used chronically)—Examples are: ibuprofen, ketoprofen, naproxen.

If you have any questions on any medications, consult your doctor or pharmacist.



year. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that five to 20 percent of Americans come down with the flu during each flu season, which typically lasts from November to March.

“It’s critical that patients with high blood pressure manage their hypertension with proper medical treatment and certain lifestyle changes,” continued Dr. Blumenthal. “Health care providers should remind their hypertensive patients about the possible risk of taking decongestants especially during the cold and flu season.”

### The Link Between Decongestants and High Blood Pressure

Decongestants work by con-

stricting blood vessels, which in turn shrinks the swelling in the nose and opens nasal passages. While this constriction of blood vessels helps alleviate congestion, it may raise high blood pressure temporarily after each dose. Some common decongestants include pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine.

Coricidin HBP®, the only line of cold and flu medications formulated to be decongestant-free for high blood pressure sufferers, is a safe and effective option for treatment of cold and flu when taken as directed. None of the four products in the Coricidin HBP® line contain a decongestant, an ingredient that can further raise the blood pressure of these patients.

### Resources for High Blood Pressure Sufferers and their Caregivers

The maker of Coricidin HBP®, a proud sponsor of the American Heart Association’s hypertension Web site, is helping to educate people with high blood pressure and those who actively participate in their care about the risk associated with decongestants. High blood pressure sufferers and their loved ones can obtain a free Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, and Weight Tracker by calling the American Heart Association at 1-800-AHA-USA1.

For more information, high blood pressure patients can visit the American Heart Association Web site at [www.americanheart.org/hbp](http://www.americanheart.org/hbp) or the Coricidin HBP® Web site at [www.coricidinhbp.com](http://www.coricidinhbp.com).