



HEALTH AWARENESS

Take Action For Healthy Blood Pressure

(NAPSA)—Nearly 60 million Americans have high blood pressure—a serious medical condition that can cause damage to the body with every beat of the heart. Although treatable, 70 percent of Americans with the condition don't have it under control.

Mount Everest-hopeful Ryan Bendixen used to be one of these people. Once a member of an elite U.S. Army group, Bendixen was honorably discharged before the first Gulf War when a physical revealed he had severe high blood pressure.

Bendixen's diagnosis took him by surprise because at age 20 he didn't fit the profile for high blood pressure: over 60 years old, high cholesterol, smoker, overweight, sedentary.

"I was devastated. I saw all my dreams evaporating," Bendixen said.

High blood pressure ended his dream of serving his country—and the side effects he experienced from the medicine he had to take almost ended his climbing. Fortunately, after several years, his doctor prescribed a different treatment called Diovan®. Switching medications eliminated his uncomfortable side effects and has enabled him to take on Mt. Everest.

"I hope my climb will inspire others to manage their high blood pressure," says the 33-year-old, who is now father to a new baby girl. His Mt. Everest expedition is being sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp., proud sponsors of "Take Action For Healthy BP" and makers of Diovan.

The Centers for Disease Control tell us that nearly 90 percent of middle aged men and women will eventually develop high blood pressure. Left untreated, high blood pressure can be serious. In fact, even slightly high blood pressure may be damaging the tiny



Climbing to New Heights: Blood pressure medication has allowed Ryan Bendixen to climb Mt. Everest. Follow his progress at www.diovan.com.

blood vessels that lead to your brain, heart, kidneys and eyes. It can also lead to life-threatening health problems such as heart attack and stroke.

Everyone with high blood pressure should make certain healthy changes to their lifestyle. For example:

- If you smoke, stop
- Exercise regularly
- Adopt a lowfat, healthy diet
- Watch salt intake
- Watch alcohol consumption
- Reduce stress

However, these changes are often not enough. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) recommends taking medicine to help lower your numbers. Treatment is recommended if your blood pressure is at or above 140/90. According to the NHLBI, normal blood pressure is below 120/80.

Learn more about Bendixen's Mt. Everest climb at www.diovan.com.

Novartis recently launched Take Action for Healthy BP, a new program to help those with high blood pressure reach their healthy goal. To learn more about the program visit www.HealthyBP.com.

Diovan® (valsartan) should be discontinued as soon as pregnancy is detected because it may cause death or injury to the unborn child. Do not take Diovan if you are allergic to any of the ingredients of this product. Side effects have generally been mild. The most common side effects with Diovan are headache and dizziness. Diovan is a proven safe and effective treatment for high blood pressure. As with any treatment plan, individual results may vary. Diovan is not right for everyone. Patients should work with their physician to determine what regimen is best to help them reach and maintain their personal blood pressure goal. For more information or full prescribing information for Diovan go to "Prescribing Info/Quick Download" at www.pharma.us.novartis.com.