

Uncontrolled High Blood Pressure: After All These Years, Still The Silent Killer

(NAPSA)—If someone told you that you could help stop a “silent killer” from making you a victim if you knew two certain numbers and could change them, would you want to know how?

If your answer is yes, then the numbers you want to know are your blood pressure levels. The “silent killer” you want to stop? Uncontrolled high blood pressure.

Your first move? Get your blood pressure checked. The goal for most people is to have a blood pressure level less than 120/80.

Your blood pressure reading is one important sign of your overall cardiovascular health status. And high blood pressure is a sneaky health problem because people rarely notice symptoms until potentially life-threatening damage has been done to the cardiovascular system.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the No. 1 risk factor for stroke, increasing risk by four to six times. And the higher your blood pressure, the greater your risk of heart attack, heart failure and kidney disease.

The scariest part is that nearly

Tips For Keeping Blood Pressure Under Control

- Follow a healthy diet by eating more whole grains, poultry, fish and nuts, and reducing the amount of fats, red meats, sweets and sugared beverages you consume
- Reduce salt in your diet
- Maintain a healthy weight—if you're overweight, losing even 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure
- Get 30 minutes of moderate-level activity on most, if not all, days of the week
- Limit alcohol intake
- Quit smoking
- Follow doctors' recommendations and take medications as prescribed



30 percent of people with high blood pressure in the United States don't even realize they have it. That's one reason why poorly managed high blood pressure is named as a suspected cause in more than 300,000 American deaths each year.

An estimated 90 percent of middle-aged American adults will develop high blood pressure during their lifetime. The best way to

tell if you have the condition is to have your blood pressure checked regularly. If detected, the good news is that high blood pressure can usually be controlled.

A healthy lifestyle is an important first step in managing high blood pressure. That means eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise. If lifestyle changes don't work, it may be necessary to add medication.

All medications have risks as well as benefits, and it is not clear why some medications cause side effects in some patients but not others. For example, some studies estimate that up to 20 percent of patients who take an angiotensin-converting enzyme, or ACE, inhibitor experience side effects, usually cough. If you are experiencing side effects with a medication, talk with your doctor to find the right treatment for you.

Remember: The best way to tell if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked. If your numbers are high, you need to work with your doctor and take action to stop the “silent killer” in its tracks.