

Ask The Experts

What Do I Need To Know About High Blood Pressure?

by John S. Banas, M.D.

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people are feeling the pressure to learn more about hypertension, and for good reason. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a significant risk factor for the progression of heart disease.



Dr. Banas

It is estimated that one in three adults in the United States has the condition and nearly a third of them don't know they have it.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure alone is serious because as blood pressure increases so does cardiovascular (CV) disease risk. Combined with other conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure becomes even more significant as it increases the chance of a CV event. It can also lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, or kidney failure.

What is high blood pressure?

Blood pressure measures the force with which blood pushes against the artery walls as it travels through the body. Hypertension, or chronically high blood pressure, can cause the heart to work too hard. This can lead to damage of the coronary arteries, the kidneys and the eyes, and is a major cause of stroke.

Who is at risk of developing high blood pressure?

The risk for cardiovascular disease doubles for those people who have both diabetes and hypertension. In fact, someone with diabetes can be up to four times more likely to develop CV disease due to a variety of risk factors, including hypertension. Lifestyle can be a factor as well. People who are overweight, use too much salt, are physically inactive or drink too much alcohol



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How is high blood pressure best treated?

High blood pressure can be treated with diet, exercise and a variety of different medications. If you have the condition, it is important to work with your health care professional to evaluate your other risk factors, such as high cholesterol or diabetes, and then select the best treatment based on your overall risk profile.

Many health care professionals turn to angiotensin-converting-enzyme (ACE) inhibitors to treat hypertension.

ACE inhibitors are designed to block or inhibit the production of a protein found in the body that causes blood vessels to constrict. ACE inhibitors relax blood vessels, making blood flow easier, which can reduce blood pressure.

An ACE inhibitor with a history of success in treating hypertension, as well as reducing cardiovascular risk, is ALTACE® (ramipril) capsules. The drug is described as the No. 1 brand name

in its class prescribed by cardiologists and endocrinologists.

Its benefits can extend well beyond blood-pressure reduction. It is the only ACE inhibitor proven to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, and CV death in high-risk patients aged 55 or over. For these patients, it was found to reduce the risk of heart attack by 20 percent, CV death by 26 percent and stroke by 32 percent. The drug has also proven the ability to reduce the risk of CV complications associated with diabetes.

Studies have shown that this drug may not be for everyone. ALTACE may lower blood sugar if taken by patients with diabetes. A physician should be contacted if one experiences symptoms of low blood sugar, such as sweating or shakiness. Common side effects include persistent dry cough, dizziness, and light-headedness due to low blood pressure. Do not take ALTACE during pregnancy, as death or injury to your unborn child may result

How is diabetes related to CV disease and high blood pressure?

Research indicates that these conditions can amplify one another. The presence of one risk factor is likely to influence the development of others. And the more risk factors you have, the higher your risk of heart disease, diabetes and stroke; however, early treatment of individual risk factors is likely to decrease the risk of developing others.

Dr. Banas is a member of many professional organizations and is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, the American College of Cardiology, and the Council on Clinical Cardiology of the American Heart Association. To learn more, visit www.altace.com.

Note To Editors: About ALTACE.

Do not take ALTACE during pregnancy, as death or injury to your unborn child may result, or if you have experienced serious side effects related to previous ACE inhibitors.

Common side effects include persistent dry cough, dizziness, and light-headedness due to low blood pressure. Prescription ALTACE is not for everyone. ALTACE may cause swelling of the mouth, tongue, or throat, which could cause extremely serious risk and requires immediate medical care. There have been reports of low blood sugar in patients taking ALTACE with medicine for diabetes. Please contact your doctor if you have symptoms of low blood sugar such as sweating or shakiness.

Dr. Banas serves as a consultant to King Pharmaceuticals. To learn more, visit www.altace.com.