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Diet Changes Can Help Your Blood Pressure

Although it is fairly typically to have a slightly different blood pressure when measured on each arm, researchers have found that a significantly different reading (defined as more than 5 points in the systolic, or the “top,” number) may be a predictor of future cardiovascular disease. In fact, a 10-point difference was associated with a 38 percent increased risk over the subsequent 13 years. Advance warning = opportunity to act early!

Healthy Japanese

The Japanese are at it again with their diets! They have found that a vegetarian diet is at least as good as the famous DASH diet when it comes to battling blood pressure. The effect was a drop of almost 7 points in systolic (top number) and almost 5 points in diastolic readings – as good as some drugs! And the side effects? Also good: weight loss, lower cholesterol, and better blood sugar control.

Healthier Brits

The British have been systematically reducing the salt added to processed foods, which can account for up to 80 percent of sodium consumption in the average diet. After eight years, they are now analyzing the results and have found that average salt intake dropped by about 15 percent, leading to a 3-point drop in blood pressure, a 42 percent reduction in stroke mortality, and a 40 percent reduction in coronary artery disease mortality. So, please, “pass” on the salt!

Transient Weights Loss has Benefit

Being overweight is a risk factor for a variety of conditions so losing weight is, obviously, a benefit in reducing these risks and/or managing the conditions. Now, a new study is demonstrating that transient weight loss confers some benefits as well. As long as a sufficient weight is lost to drop from one BMI category to another (e.g. from obese to overweight), there is a 9 percent reduction in risk of stroke or heart attack, even if the weight is regained.

Monitoring your blood pressure is a simple, non-invasive way to monitor your cardiovascular health and assess your efforts to make improvements. Your pharmacist can help you select a home meter or offer in-pharmacy systems.