



The Lowdown On High Blood Pressure

(NAPSA)—According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 68 million people—1 in 3 U.S. adults—have high blood pressure. Also known as hypertension, high blood pressure can lead to a stroke or heart attack. Fortunately, high blood pressure is a preventable and treatable risk factor for heart attack and stroke.

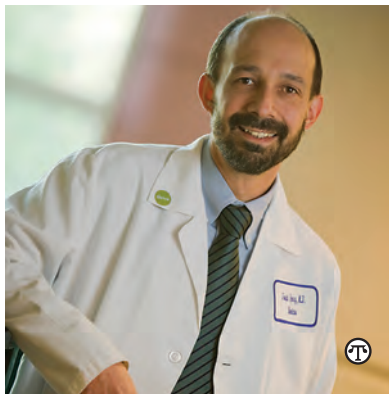
To help, Joseph Young, M.D., a Kaiser Permanente internal medicine physician and the clinical hypertension lead with The Permanente Medical Group, answers a few basic questions and offers advice on how to keep your blood pressure in check.

Q: Can you give a quick Blood Pressure 101?

A: Blood pressure is just the pressure of blood flowing inside the body's blood vessels. The top number is the pressure when the heart pumps at its peak. The bottom number is the pressure when the heart is relaxing and filling back up with blood. An ideal blood pressure is 119/79 or lower.

Q: What is high blood pressure?

A: If your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher, you have high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. In the United States, 29 percent of the adult population, or roughly 70 million people, has high blood pressure. Weight, lack of physical activity, consuming too much salt or alcohol, stress, older age, genetics, family history and various diseases are contributing factors for high blood pressure. Fortunately, high blood pressure is preventable



Dr. Young offers advice on overcoming high blood pressure.

and treatable with a healthy lifestyle and a number of well-tolerated, once-daily medications.

Q: What are the main guidelines for healthy practices that can reduce risk?

A: Regular physical activity is very important and helps to lower blood pressure. Pick something you enjoy—that will make it easier to stick with it. It doesn't have to be fancy. You could just walk briskly at least 150 minutes a week, for example. Limit salt intake, too, because salt causes fluid retention, which increases blood pressure. Cook with unprocessed fresh fruits, vegetables and lean sources of protein. Don't drink too much alcohol and do quit smoking. Smoking does not increase blood pressure but smoking combined with high blood pressure or with any other risk factor is especially dangerous.

Q: What is the role of medication with high blood pressure?

A: Medications are very impor-

tant for most people with high blood pressure. The medications we've used to treat high blood pressure have been around for decades. Over time, we've learned that combining medications in low doses works best and causes the fewest side effects. Today, most people with high blood pressure who need medications can control their condition with a once-a-day regimen with minor to no side effects.

Q: Do you have any parting words of advice?

A: High blood pressure in and of itself is just a number. We care about it because we know if the number is high, there is an increased risk of stroke and heart and kidney problems. If you have high blood pressure, have it checked regularly and have frequent adjustments made in your treatment regimen until it's well controlled. If you don't have a history of high blood pressure, it's still best to have your blood pressure checked every two years.

A commitment to reduce hypertension, strokes and heart attacks:

Kaiser Permanente is recognized as a national leader in reducing and preventing heart attacks and strokes. Kaiser Permanente Colorado was recently hailed as a 2012 Million Hearts Hypertension Control Champion. In Northern California, 86 percent of Kaiser Permanente members with hypertension have their blood pressure under control compared to 50 percent nationally. For more information, visit www.kp.org. For questions or advice about a specific condition, consult with your physician.