

Health Trends

Treating And Preventing Heart Problems

(NAPSA)—If you're a senior or love someone who is, take heart. A new study is shedding light on ways to help older Americans keep healthier longer. According to the study, thousands of heart attacks, strokes and deaths could be prevented if patients used prescription blood-pressure medicine.

The study, "Reducing the Human Impact of High Blood Pressure," looked at the number of strokes, heart attacks, deaths and nursing facility placements that could be avoided every year if all seniors were to actively treat their high blood pressure. For instance, it was discovered that proper treatment of high blood pressure could prevent almost 7,000 deaths in Los Angeles alone.

"Currently, two-thirds of Medicare beneficiaries have hypertension, which puts millions of seniors at risk annually," according to Dr. Paul Antony, chief medical officer for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. "Yet, for most people, high blood pressure can be controlled."

High blood pressure has no symptoms. If you're at risk, you should be tested regularly by your doctor. Self-tests at pharmacies and convenience stores are useful, but may not be totally reliable. Get tested if you're over 60, if you smoke, if you eat a lot of salt, if you lead a high-stress lifestyle or if you suffer from diabetes.

Nationwide, the study found that about a quarter of senior citizens with hypertension can easily



Heart health is important for seniors looking to lead active lives.

manage their condition with proper treatment. Active treatment includes proper diet, exercise, lifestyle changes and taking prescription medications in consultation with a doctor.

The study demonstrates that diseases often associated with age are not simply inevitable consequences of getting older. With the help of a physician, these diseases can actually be sometimes treated, controlled and prevented.

One sponsor of the study was the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), an association representing the country's leading pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies. Members are devoted to inventing medicines that allow patients to live longer, healthier and more productive lives and are leading the way in the search for new cures. Learn more at www.phrma.org.