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INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN

Avery Health - Education and Consulting brings extensive experience and knowledge to help individuals and groups achieve positive health outcomes and implement equity.

Kathey Avery, founder and owner of Avery Health - Education and Consulting, has more than 35 years of experience in healthcare and community activism. She is dedicated to raising awareness about, and helping in the prevention of, chronic diseases and preventable cancers through patient and public education and personal accountability.

Contact Kathey Avery today at 828-768-2369 to schedule a talk or workshop. For more details, please visit **www.AveryHEC.com**



The mission of the Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy is to promote optimum health for all residents of Buncombe County and surrounding areas by addressing the social determinants of health and the inequities in access to affordable and preventive healthcare.

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Hypertension/High Blood Pressure & Stroke

BY KATHEY AVERY, RN, BSN, CO-CHAIR

This month I share information on another condition that increases the risk for severe illness from Covid-19: high blood pressure, or hypertension.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to a stroke which can change your life forever.

Many of you knew my cousin Linda D. Thomas, who died Tuesday, May 18 from complications due to stroke. After years of dealing with the complications due to having many strokes, she lived for several years at the Laurels at Green Tree Ridge. Thank you, Green Tree Ridge, for the loving care you provide.

Every individual needs to know how important it is to learn about high blood pressure. Taking your own blood pressure is personal responsibility and great self-care.

A stroke causes the part of the brain that is blocked by a blood clot to die. 43% of African Americans have hypertension. You can feel fine and still have high blood pressure.

What is Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the amount of force exerted by the blood against the walls of the arteries. It is expressed in two numbers. The first number is the systolic blood pressure. It is measured as the force when the heart beats. The second number is the diastolic blood pressure. It is the pressure in the arteries between the heart beats.

People with high blood pressure, also called hypertension, are at risk for heart disease, kidney disease, and stroke.

How HIGH is high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is when either the systolic (first number) or the diastolic (second number) is high. Blood pressure is considered "high" when it stays above the normal levels over a period of time.

Systolic

120-139

Less than 120

140 or higher

Speech - Confusion,
trouble speaking or
understanding speech

Time – Call 911 immediately.

You can also have trouble seeing in one or both eyes. You may have trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, and/or severe headache with no known cause. Even if you have only one symptom or your symptoms go away, call 911 and go to the emergency department.

The risk of having a first stroke is nearly twice as high for Blacks as for whites. Blacks have the highest rate of death due to stroke.

Last month you learned smokers are twice as likely to have a heart attack as someone who doesn't smoke. Women who take birth control pills and smoke cigarettes greatly increase their risk of heart attack, stroke, blood clots, and peripheral vascular disease. This month I encourage you to take steps to reduce your chances of stroke.

Lower your salt intake

Begin lowering your salt intake. The average daily sodium intake for Americans is 3,400 milligrams per day, an excessive amount that raises blood pressure and poses health risks.

In general, Americans should limit

daily sodium consumption to 2,300 milligrams, (an upper safe limit, not a recommended daily allowance).

Similar to having a colonoscopy when you have your 50th birthday, (recommended earlier for people of color), I would suggest that when indi-

viduals turn 18, (adulthood) they purchase a blood pressure cuff (sphygmomanometer) and use it. Learn what blood pressure is and when you need to check with healthcare providers.

Source: CDC

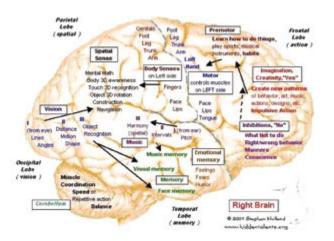
Diastolic

80-89

Less than 80

90 or higher





Chronic Conditions that Increase Risk of Severe Illness from Covid-19

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and low-wealth communities suffer from disproportionate chronic illnesses, making them higher priority for vaccination.

The CDC has compiled the following list of conditions that put someone at higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19.

- Asthma (moderate to severe)
- Cancer, Cerebrovascular disease, or history of stroke
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Cystic Fibrosis
 Demontis or oth
- Dementia or other neurologic condition
- Diabetes type 1 or 2
- Down Syndrome
- Serious heart condition (e.g., heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy)
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (e.g., weakened immune system from immune deficiencies)
- HIV, taking chronic steroids or other immune weakening medicines
- History of solid organ, blood, or bone marrow transplant
- Liver disease (including hepatitis)
- · Pulmonary fibrosis
- Overweight or obesity
- Pregnancy, Sickle Cell disease (not including sickle cell trait), or Thalassemia
- Smoking (current or former smoker)

Statistics

Normal

Blood Pressure

Prehypertension *

Hypertension

- Stroke kills about 140,000 Americans each year—that's 1 out of every 20 deaths.
- Someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds. Every 4 minutes, someone dies of stroke.
- Every year, more than 795,000 people in the United States have a stroke. About 610,000 of these are first or new strokes.
- About 185,000 strokes—nearly 1 of 4 are in people who have had a previous stroke

Warning signs of a stroke: Think F-A-S-T

Face – Numbness or weakness of the face; ask them to smile.

Arms – Weakness can also be of one arm; ask them to raise their arm. Weakness can also be in the leg. Weakness is usually on one side of the body.