

PRESS RELEASE

Five commons myths of high blood pressure ***Prairie Heart Institute at HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland*** ***brings attention to National Blood Pressure Education Month***

HIGHLAND – May is National Blood Pressure Education Month, and it is important to educate yourself about high blood pressure so that you can make smart choices.

Each time your heart beats, it is sending blood into your arteries. Blood pressure is the force of your blood as it pushes against the walls of your arteries.

“When your blood pressure remains high over time, this can cause the heart to have to work harder and pump faster,” said Katherine Corbin, NP a nurse practitioner with Prairie Heart Institute at HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital Highland. “This can lead to serious health problems such as an increasing chance of heart attack, stroke and kidney failure.”

Blood pressure is measured using two numbers: systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure. Systolic blood pressure measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. Diastolic blood pressure measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats. A normal blood pressure reading for adults is a systolic pressure of less than 120 mm Hg (standard unit of measurement for pressure) and a diastolic pressure of less than 80 mm Hg, or “120/80”. Your blood pressure will change throughout the day but having high blood pressure means your blood pressure is consistently above normal.

“People who make positive lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly, may be able to control or reduce their blood pressure,” said Corbin. “However, some people with high blood pressure cannot manage their condition through lifestyle changes alone. They need medication to help lower their blood pressure; consult your family doctor to determine if medication is right for you.”

According to the American Heart Association, these are five common myths of high blood pressure:

1. **Myth: High blood pressure runs in my family, so there is nothing I can do to prevent it.**
 - Many people who have parents or close, blood-related relatives with high blood pressure are able to avoid developing high blood pressure by making heart-healthy lifestyle changes.
2. **Myth: I don't use table salt, so I'm in control of my sodium intake and blood pressure.**
 - In some people, sodium can increase blood pressure. Simply avoiding table salt does not mean you are in control of your sodium intake. Make sure to read the nutrition label on prepared and prepackaged food, and look for the words “soda”, “sodium” or the symbol “Na” to gain an understanding of how much sodium compound is present in your diet.
3. **Myth: I was diagnosed with high blood pressure, but I have been maintaining lower readings, so I can stop taking my blood pressure medication.**

- High blood pressure can be a lifelong disease. Do not stop taking your blood pressure medication before consulting with your primary care physician.
4. **Myth: People with high blood pressure experience nervousness, sweating, difficulty sleeping and flush faces. I feel fine, so I don't have to worry about my blood pressure.**
- High blood pressure is often called the “silent killer” because it usually has no warning signs and many people have it for years without knowing. Don't make the mistake of assuming any specific symptoms will let you know there's a problem. The only way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to get regularly checked by your primary health care physician.
5. **Myth: I read that wine is good for the heart, which means I can drink as much as I want.**
- Heavy and regular use of alcohol can increase blood pressure dramatically. If you do drink alcohol, including red wine, do so in moderation. Stick to the recommended two drinks or less per day for men and one drink or less per day for women. Generally, one drink equals a 12-ounce beer, a four-ounce glass of wine, 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor or one ounce of hard liquor.

For more information about high blood pressure, visit heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure.

If you are concerned about your heart health, Prairie Cardiovascular has physicians and providers in Highland to partner with you. To learn more about the doctors of Prairie, call 888-4PRAIRIE or visit Prairieheart.org.

###

About Prairie Heart Institute of Illinois

The Prairie Heart Institute of Illinois (PHII) is a community-based network of hospitals that offers cardiovascular programs staffed by the nationally recognized Prairie Cardiovascular, the largest group of cardiologists in the tri-state region. Because of the Prairie Education and Research Consortium (PERC), network hospitals of PHII also have access to drugs and treatments not widely available. The network hospitals of PHII offer the highest level of cardiovascular care possible in their communities. When more specialized care is needed, it is available in Springfield, O'Fallon or Carbondale.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: This message and all attachments may be confidential or protected by privilege. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distribution or use of the information contained in or attached to this message is strictly prohibited. Please notify the sender of the delivery error by replying to this message, and then delete it from your system. Thank you.