

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Tiffany Knauf
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2333
E-mail: tknauf@nd.gov

May is National High Blood Pressure Awareness Month

BISMARCK, N.D. – May is National High Blood Pressure Awareness Month and the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Division of Chronic Disease wants residents to know their blood pressure numbers and work to keep their blood pressure under control.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), approximately one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, usually has no signs or symptoms; hence, it is known as the silent killer. High blood pressure makes the heart work too hard and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Over 17 million people world-wide die each year from heart disease, making it the world's leading cause of death. Heart disease, generally refers to conditions that involve narrowed or blocked blood vessels that can lead to a heart attack, chest pain, or a stroke.

There's only one way to know whether you have high blood pressure— have a doctor or other health professional measure it. Measuring your blood pressure is quick and painless. The American Heart Association defines normal blood pressure as less than 120/80 mmHg and recommends regular screenings starting at age 20. If your blood pressure is less than 120/80 mmHg, screening is recommended once every two years.

Eighty percent of heart disease is preventable, according to the American Heart Association. Simple lifestyle changes can have a life-saving impact on reducing high blood pressure, and in turn, reducing the risk for heart disease and stroke.

Lifestyle changes that can reduce high blood pressure include: healthy eating, enough quality sleep, being physically active, quit smoking, managing stress, and knowing your numbers! To easily track blood pressure numbers, the American Heart Association has developed Heart360 (www.heart360.org), a free web-based tool that can be shared with your health care provider.

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The NDDoH offers free educational materials to help people manage their blood pressure, eat healthier, become more physically active, and quit smoking. For more information, visit www.ndhealth.gov/heartstroke/ or call 1.800.280.5512.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@nd.gov

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.