



Hypertension

Section Summary

- Hypertension is a condition characterized by higher than normal blood pressure levels.
 - It is more colloquially referred to as “high blood pressure”.
 - People in midlife with hypertension have a 60% higher risk of developing dementia.
 - Risk factors for hypertension include:
 - Consuming less than 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day
 - Less participation in physical exercise
 - Having other health conditions such as diabetes
 - Chronic kidney disease (among women)
 - Obesity or being overweight
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Activities

All activities in this section should be completed privately by participants.

Activity One: Risk Inventory

- Start by reading aloud the following risk factors for hypertension:
 - A high in salt, fat, and/or cholesterol diet.
 - Kidney problems, diabetes or high cholesterol.
 - Family history of hypertension.
 - Lack of physical activity.
 - Older age.
 - Being overweight or obese.
 - High stress levels.
 - Tobacco use or heavy alcohol consumption.
- Have participants privately write down (and take inventory) of which risk factors apply to them personally, leaving room to write below each listed item.

- Then have them write out the total *number* of risk factors that apply to them.
 - This will be revisited in Activity Two

Activity Two: Let Go to Go Low

- Using the list that was already created in Activity One, have participants write below each risk factor something they are willing to do (a goal) to lower their risk factor in that category.
 - Note there are some risk factors that cannot be changed, ie. age and family history.
- Upon creating goals for each category, have participants subtract from their original number the amount of categories in which they are willing and able to make meaningful changes to to reduce their risk factor.
- Have participants compare their original risk number to their final risk number.

This activity serves as an awareness exercise only and participants should always consult with their healthcare provider when seeking a formal hypertension diagnosis or when making dietary and lifestyle changes that may impact their health.

Discussion Questions

- Were you aware of all your personal risk factors for hypertension before this session?
- When making healthy choices for yourself how much do you consider factors like: stress management, diet adjustments and physical activity?