

HYPERTENSION



Fast Facts from the 2009 Survey on Living with Chronic Disease in Canada

People with high blood pressure, also called hypertension, are at increased risk for heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. **One in five Canadians over the age of 20 years are aware that they have this condition.**¹

What are Canadians with hypertension doing to control their high blood pressure?

The Canadian Hypertension Education Program currently recommends that people with hypertension:

- Aim to lower their blood pressure below 140/90 mmHg, and in those with diabetes or chronic kidney disease below 130/80 mmHg
- Have their blood pressure monitored regularly by a health professional
- Monitor their blood pressure at home, using a home blood pressure monitor endorsed by the Canadian Hypertension Society
- Have a plan for controlling their blood pressure
- Make and maintain healthy lifestyle changes, the cornerstone for controlling high blood pressure. These lifestyle changes include:
 - Reducing dietary sodium (salt)
 - Eating a diet that emphasizes vegetables, fruits, dairy and meats low in saturated fat
 - Engaging in 30-60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity 4-7 days per week
 - Maintaining a healthy body weight
 - Limiting alcohol consumption
 - Quitting smoking
- Take appropriate medication to control their high blood pressure as prescribed by their doctor

The Public Health Agency of Canada's **2009 Survey on Living with Chronic Disease in Canada**

provides new information on how well Canadians with hypertension are following these recommendations. This recent survey, conducted by Statistics Canada, interviewed a nationally-representative sample of 6,142 people with self-reported high blood pressure diagnosed by a health professional.

Maintaining healthy blood pressure involves ongoing monitoring

Blood pressure at healthy levels

- 78% of Canadians with hypertension considered their blood pressure to be well-controlled
- 4% considered their blood pressure high and 17% considered their blood pressure to be borderline high; less than 1% reported that they did not know

Blood pressure checked regularly

- Most people with hypertension (95%) reported having had their blood pressure checked by a health professional at least once in the past year; 5% of Canadians with hypertension reported not having a family doctor
- 46% of Canadians with hypertension reported monitoring their blood pressure at home; of these, two thirds said they had been shown how by a health professional

Plan to control high blood pressure

- The majority of Canadians with hypertension (85%) felt they had a plan to control their blood pressure
- Over half of people with hypertension (53%) said they had never discussed a target for their blood pressure with a health professional

- Nearly all (93%) felt they had enough information to control their blood pressure
- 66% of individuals with hypertension said they would like to receive information and training on hypertension during medical appointments

Managing high blood pressure with lifestyle changes and/or medication

People with hypertension reported having tried to change their lifestyle behaviours to control their blood pressure or for other reasons

- 89% reported limiting their salt intake
- 89% reported changing the types of foods they eat
- 80% reported having tried exercise or participating in physical activities
- 66% reported having tried to control their weight or lose weight, an additional 26% felt they were already at a healthy body weight
- Of those who smoked, 75% reported having quit or reduced smoking
- Of those who drank more alcohol than recommended, 57% reported having reduced the amount they consume

Many individuals with hypertension had not adopted or maintained healthy lifestyles and healthy weights that would help control their high blood pressure

- 58% of Canadians with hypertension were physically inactive, based on self-reported leisure-time physical activity
- 71% of Canadians with hypertension were overweight or obese, based on self-reported height and weight

- 58% reported not eating five to ten servings of fruit and vegetables per day
- 17% reported smoking daily or occasionally

Medication is an important element in controlling blood pressure

- Most Canadians with hypertension (82%) reported taking blood pressure medication. Of these, 62% said they took 1 medication, 27% took 2 medications and 11% were taking 3 or more medications for their blood pressure
- 10% of individuals with hypertension reported not taking medication because their blood pressure was being controlled without medication

Summary

Most Canadians with hypertension reported that their blood pressure was well-controlled, and they were taking medication, had a plan and had enough information to manage their hypertension. Programs like the Canadian Hypertension Education Program and others have contributed to this success.

However, a substantial portion of people with hypertension (one in four) reported that their blood pressure was not well-controlled, some people (one in twenty) didn't have a family physician, and many were physically inactive (58%), overweight or obese (71%), smoked daily (17%), and didn't eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day (58%). Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and having a healthy weight are cornerstones of hypertension control and reduce the need for medication.

1 Public Health Agency of Canada. Hypertension Facts and Figures. Retrieved October 2009. http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/cvd-mcv/hypertension_figures-eng.php

Additional information on high blood pressure can be found online at:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/cvd-mcv/hypertension-eng.php
- The Canadian Hypertension Education Program
<http://hypertension.ca/chep/>
- Blood Pressure Canada
www.hypertension.ca/bpc
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation
www.heartandstroke.com

More information about the 2009 Survey on Living with Chronic Disease in Canada can be found online at:

- Statistics Canada
www.statcan.gc.ca