



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Hypertensive Kids

Hypertension Among Youth — United States, 2001-2016

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling. We usually think of hypertension, or high blood pressure, as a problem for adults, but it can begin in childhood, and when it does, it can result in serious health problems later in life. Dr. Sandra Jackson is with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the dangers of hypertension in adolescents. Welcome to the show, Sandra.

[Dr. Jackson] Thank you for having me.

[Dr. Dooling] Sandra, define high blood pressure for us.

[Dr. Jackson] Having high blood pressure means that the pressure in your blood vessels is higher than it should be, or higher than 120 over 80 for most adults. Normal blood pressure changes as the body grows, so to classify high blood pressure in youth, we use percentiles or cutoff. The American Academy of Pediatrics recently updated the guidelines for diagnosing elevated blood pressure and hypertension in youth.

[Dr. Dooling] How common is hypertension among young people?

[Dr. Jackson] Among youth aged 12 to 19 in the U.S., we estimated that nearly 1.3 million would have hypertension according to the new guidelines, which is about 4 percent of the population. In a classroom of about 30 youth, you would expect one to have hypertension and about three more to have elevated blood pressure.

[Dr. Dooling] What are the signs and symptoms of high blood pressure?

[Dr. Jackson] Often there aren't any symptoms, that's why regular checkups and routine blood pressure screenings are important.

[Dr. Dooling] What health problems can result from uncontrolled high blood pressure?

[Dr. Jackson] Youth who have high blood pressure are more likely to have hypertension in adulthood. In adults, hypertension increases the risk of serious and deadly conditions such as heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

[Dr. Dooling] What are some risk factors for hypertension among adolescents?

[Dr. Jackson] Youth who are older, male, or had obesity, were the most likely to have hypertension. Although, some risk factors, such as family history, can't be controlled, youth can take steps to lower their risk.

[Dr. Dooling] What can adolescents do to prevent or control high blood pressure?

[Dr. Jackson] To improve heart health, it's important for youth to get enough physical activity and to eat a healthy diet. Choosing low sodium foods and a healthy eating plan, such as the dietary approaches to stop hypertension, or DASH diet, can help lower blood pressure.

[Dr. Dooling] Sandra, where can listeners get more information about high blood pressure?

[Dr. Jackson] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/bloodpressure.

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Sandra. I've been talking today with Dr. Sandra Jackson about the dangers of hypertension among adolescents. To reduce the risk of high blood pressure, your entire family should engage in heart healthy behavior, such as physical activity and a healthy diet. Additionally, routine medical check-ups should include blood pressure screening. Early diagnosis and management is key to controlling this serious condition. Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.