



Office of Minority Health

Newsletter - May 2020

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COVID-19 and Health Equity: It's deeper than preexisting conditions

Article taken from Public Health Newswire by Louise Dettman on 4/17/2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought more attention to the field of public health. Every day, people are seeing and hearing from epidemiologists, clinicians, laboratory scientists, researchers and more. While the spotlight is on the field, we should seize this moment to bring national attention to our greatest imperative: reducing health disparities and advancing health equity.

The public health field has an opportunity to shape the discourse about COVID-19 inequities to ensure that the root causes of the problem are acknowledged and addressed within, and well beyond, the pandemic.

As calls for race and ethnicity data in COVID-19 morbidity and mortality are heeded, we're learning more about the communities and populations being disproportionately impacted. The prevalence of preexisting conditions — such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease — among people who are dying from COVID-19 is also being emphasized.

As public health professionals, we know these same chronic conditions plagued low-income and communities of color at alarmingly high rates for decades before the current pandemic. We also know that these health disparities are the result of years of intentional disinvestment in communities. Lack of access to basic services, living wage jobs and affordable quality housing, education and health care are all veiled by a system that assigns value and structures opportunity based on how a person looks, i.e., racism.

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Minority Health Advisory Committee Meeting

⚡ **Please note that the May meeting has been CANCELLED.**

Next scheduled meeting:
July 20, 2020 11:00 AM

We are looking into virtual meeting options.

* Feel free to share this invitation

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month

High blood pressure usually develops over time. It can happen because of unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as not getting enough regular physical activity. Certain health conditions, such as diabetes and having obesity, can also increase the risk



for developing high blood pressure. High blood pressure can also happen during pregnancy.

High blood pressure can damage your health in many ways. It can seriously hurt important organs like your heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes.

Anyone can develop high blood pressure, but people at higher risk are:

- Older adults
- Non-Hispanic blacks
- U.S.-born adults
- Adults with lower family income, lower education, public health insurance, diabetes, obesity, or a disability

The good news is that, in most cases, you can manage your blood pressure to lower your risk for serious health problems with some simple lifestyle changes.

[Learn More](#)

High Blood Pressure Education Month

Easy places to get your blood pressure checked:



Pharmacy



Doctor's office



At home with a home monitoring device



Prevent High Blood Pressure

Eat a Healthy Diet

Eat healthy meals and snacks with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Ask your doctor about eating a variety of foods rich in potassium, fiber, and protein and lower in salt (sodium) and saturated fat.

Following the [DASH Diet](#) has been shown to greatly reduce blood pressure in many adults.

Keep Yourself at a Healthy Weight

Being overweight and obese can greatly increase your risk for having high blood pressure. Following a healthy diet and exercising can help you stay at a healthy weight.

Be Physically Active

Physical activity can help keep you at a healthy weight and lower your blood pressure. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking or bicycling, every week. That's about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a

Manage High Blood Pressure

Measure Your Blood Pressure on a Regular Basis:

Because high blood pressure and elevated blood pressure often have no symptoms, checking your blood pressure is the only way to know for sure whether it is too high.

Manage Diabetes

Most people with diabetes—about 6 out of 10—also have high blood pressure. If you have diabetes, monitor your blood glucose (also called blood sugar) levels carefully and talk with your health care team about treatment options.

Take Your Medicine

If you take medicine to treat high blood pressure or other health conditions, follow your doctor's or health care professional's instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you do not understand something, and never stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor or pharmacist first.

Make Lifestyle Changes

week. Children and adolescents should get 1 hour of physical activity every day.

Do Not Smoke

Smoking raises your blood pressure and puts you at higher risk for heart attack and stroke. If you do not smoke, do not start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk for heart disease.

Limit How Much Alcohol You Drink

Do not drink too much alcohol, which can raise your blood pressure. Men should have no more than 2 alcoholic drinks per day, and women should have no more than 1 alcoholic drink per day.

Get Enough Sleep

Getting enough sleep is important to your overall health, and enough sleep is part of keeping your heart and blood vessels healthy. Not getting enough sleep on a regular basis is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.

If you have high blood pressure, you can lower it by making lifestyle changes such as being physically active and eating healthy. Eat a diet filled with fruits and vegetables and try to get 150 minutes of activity per week.

Talk with Your Health Care Team

You and your health care team can work together to prevent or treat the medical conditions that lead to high blood pressure. Discuss your treatment plan regularly and bring a list of questions to your appointments.



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