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VOLUME VIII-ISSUE 4

NOV-DEC 2010 Rs.50

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Blood Ka Pressure

Dr. Nupur Krishnan turns the spotlight on hypertension or high blood pressure and suggests ways to combat it

Have you ever felt angry, anxious, upset or tense? At such times you will have noticed a rush of blood, especially in your head, and your heart beating loudly and vigorously. You consider this normal. But there are other times when your heart is pumping hard at high pressure and you may not notice.

Many people, especially middle aged professionals and the elderly, are ignorant of their blood pressure levels until something or somebody brings it to their notice. Measuring your blood pressure at regular intervals is very essential for a healthy life. Let us find out why.

What is blood pressure?

Our blood circulates in our entire body to supply oxygen and nutrients. To ensure a continuous supply of blood, our lungs, heart and kidneys work in a synchronised manner. The heart pumps out the blood through the arteries with a certain amount of force to ensure that the blood reaches all parts of the body and then returns to the heart.

The amount of pressure applied to the walls of arteries is called 'blood pressure'. This rises and falls during the day depending on physical activity, temperature, diet, emotional state, posture, physical state, and medication use. This fluctuation is harmless, but a continued state of high or low blood pressure is harmful.

Prehypertension means you don't have high blood pressure now but are likely to develop it in the future. You can take steps to prevent high blood pressure by adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle.

There is an exception to the above definition - for a diabetic or kidney disease patient, blood pressure of 130/80 or more is considered high. When systolic and diastolic blood pressures fall into different categories, the higher category should be used to classify blood pressure level. For example, 160 Systolic and 80 Diastolic would mean Stage 2 high blood pressure.

Category	Systolic pressure When heart beats	Diastolic pressure Between heart beats
Low blood pressure	Less than 90	Less than 60
Normal	90 - 119	60- 79
Prehypertension	120 - 139	80 - 89
Hypertension Stage 1	140 - 159	90 - 99
Hypertension Stage 2	160 or higher	100 or higher

High blood pressure is often silent for