

Healthy blood pressure, healthy heart beat

COL DR A F M SHAMSUL HAQUE

Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure affects more than 1.5 billion people around the world. Hypertension may not cause symptoms and can kill people silently. Thus, it is a global challenge. However, it is a potentially preventable disease which is easily measurable and controllable.

In order to inspire and encourage everybody for prevention, detection, treatment and control of hypertension, World Hypertension Day was observed on May 17. The theme was "Healthy blood pressure and Healthy heart beat" which emphasised the fact — if blood pressure is not under control, it can lead to a disease of irregular heart beat known as Atrial Fibrillation (AF) which can be life-threatening.

Blood pressure of 140/90 mm of Hg or higher is called hypertension. Uncontrolled pressure can lead to a number of fatal complications including stroke, heart attack and other heart diseases, kidney failure, blindness. In Bangladesh, approximately



20% of adult and 40-65% of elderly people suffer from hypertension according to a study report titled "Hypertension in Bangladesh". Obesity, high salt intake and physical inactivity are main contributing factors. In some studies, the prevalence of hypertension in the rural

population was unexpectedly high, which was associated with high salt intake in rural areas.

The prevalence of hypertension is rising by and due to unhealthy life style, behavioural changes, ageing, unhealthy dietary habits, lack of physical activity, overweight and stressful life.

Hypertension may be primary where the cause is unknown and associated with familial influence and age related changes. The other situation is secondary hypertension where the cause is secondary to renal disease and hormonal diseases. However, all forms of hypertension is treatable.

Hypertension is posing a great challenge to the world community. The control of hypertension requires orchestrated and dedicated efforts involving all spheres of the society, not just physician alone. Awareness is the key to prevent and control hypertension. The following 6 steps prescribed by the American Society of Hypertension can help lower high blood pressure.

1. Follow a healthy eating plan: Healthy diet includes adequate vegetable and fruits.

2. Get to and stay at a healthy weight: Ideal body weight is essential for good health.

3. Eat less salt: Excess salt can lead to hypertension.

4. Exercise: Sedentary life style is damaging. Physical activity keeps body fit.

5. Stop smoking: Smoking is injurious and contributes to high blood pressure.

6. Take your blood pressure at home: Home blood pressure reading is more representative.

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HEALTH bulletin

Everyday noise levels may affect the heart

Even the minor noise that fills everyday life, from the ring of a cell phone to the conversation that follows, may have short-term effects on heart function, a small new study published in Environmental Health Perspectives suggests.

Air pollution increases risk of insulin resistance in children

Growing up in areas where air pollution is increased raises the risk of insulin resistance (the precursor to diabetes) in children, according to new study published in Diabetologia.

Eating peppers tied to lower Parkinson's risk

Eating vegetables that naturally contain nicotine, such as peppers and tomatoes, may reduce your risk of developing Parkinson's disease, according to a new study published in Annals of Neurology.



How breastfeeding benefits mother

PROF M KARIM KHAN

We often discuss about importance of breastfeeding for babies. We all know that breast milk is the best and ideal food for babies till six month of life and thereafter along with complementary food. On the contrary, we rarely discuss about the numerous benefits for mothers who breastfeed their child.

The benefits start immediately after giving birth. Breastfeeding at that time reduces a mother's risk of postpartum haemorrhage or heavy bleeding after delivery which is the major cause of maternal mortality.

Exclusive breastfeeding acts as a natural contraceptive method and reduces the need of artificial methods for at least 3 months.

Many studies have found that breastfeeding for a longer time helps in preventing breast cancer, uterine and ovarian cancer. The reduction in cancer risk comes in proportion to the cumulative lifetime duration of breastfeeding — the more months or years a mother breastfeeds, the lower her risk of breast cancer is. One of the reasons for the cancer-fighting effects of breastfeeding is that estrogen levels are lower during lactation. It is thought that the less estrogen available to stimulate the uterus and ovary and perhaps breast tissue also, the less the risk of these tissues becoming cancerous.

Breastfeeding burns extra calories. So it can help you losing pregnancy weight faster. It releases the hormone oxytocin,



which helps your uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size and may reduce uterine bleeding after birth.

Breastfeeding is associated with suppression of the secretion of stress-responsive hormones in women that help relieve psychological stress and enhances immune function. Studies show that breastfeeding mothers show less postpartum anxiety and depression than do formula-feeding mothers.

Prolonged breastfeeding may help in reducing bone loss and subsequent fracture in later life after menopause.

Breastfeeding may take a little more effort than formula feeding at first. But it can make life easier once

you and your baby settle into a good routine. Plus, when you breastfeed, there are no bottles and nipples to sterilise. You do not have to buy, measure and mix formula. And there are no bottles to warm in the middle of the night. You can satisfy your baby's hunger right away when breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is not only beneficial for baby, but also equally important and useful for mothers. We all should encourage breastfeeding for the sake of healthy mother and healthy baby.

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DIARRHOEA

Rotavirus remains deadly, although solution in hand

Vaccine at US\$ 1!

STAR HEALTH REPORT

A new international study published recently in The Lancet provides the clearest picture yet of the impact and most common causes of diarrhoeal diseases, the second leading killer of young children globally, after pneumonia. The Global Enteric Multicenter Study (GEMS) is the largest study ever conducted on diarrhoeal diseases in developing countries, enrolling more than 20,000 children from seven sites across Africa and Asia including Bangladesh.

GEMS, coordinated by the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Center for Vaccine Development, confirmed rotavirus — for which a vaccine already exists — as the leading cause of diarrhoeal diseases among infants and identified other top causes for which additional research is urgently needed.

GEMS found that approximately one in five children under the age of two suffer from moderate-to-severe diarrhoea (MSD) each year, which increased children's risk of death 8.5 fold and lead to stunted growth over a two-month follow-up period. The GEMS study in Bangladesh was conducted in Mirzapur through the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research (icddr,b).

Expanding access to existing interventions that protect against or treat all diarrhoeal diseases, including oral rehydration solutions, zinc supplements, clean water and sanitation, can save lives and improve the health of children immediately. However, vaccine to prevent leading cause, Rotavirus is crucial to reduce mortality and morbidity.

Recently, Department of Biotechnology and Bharat Biotech of India has announced positive results from the Phase III clinical trial of ROTAVAC®, at the lowest price available on the market of US\$ 1.00 per dose, says a press release. This is very useful for low-middle income countries to cover the vaccine at large scale. The trial showed that the vaccine significantly reduced Rotavirus by more than half during the first year of life when children face the greatest risk of Rotavirus infection.

Billions without access to improved sanitation

One-third of the world's population — some 2.4 billion people will remain without access to improved sanitation in 2015, according to a joint WHO/UNICEF report issued recently.

The report, entitled Progress on sanitation and drinking water 2013 update, warns that, at the current rate of progress, the 2015 Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the proportion of the 1990 population without sanitation will be missed by 8% — or half a billion people. The report reveals that there is continues striking disparity between those living in rural areas and those who live in cities. Urban dwellers make up three-quarters of those with access to piped water supplies at home. Rural communities comprise 83% of the global population without access to improved drinking water source and 71% of those living without sanitation.

Experts from the World Health Organisation (WHO) have identified it as an urgent need and urged everyone work to ensure all the necessary pieces are in place — political commitment, funding, leadership — so the world can accelerate progress and reach the MDG sanitation target.

By improving access to basic sanitation we can transform the world and lives of millions of children. This will give us numerous benefits for health and well-being and to end poverty. Every day hundreds of children are dying. Every day, thousands of parents mourn their sons and daughters. We should act in the face of this colossal daily human tragedy.

Source: World Health Organisation



Knowing for better living

Sleep adequately

Reduce the effects of estrogen

Use sunglasses in bright environments

Identify migraine triggers

Consult your Doctor

75% migraine sufferers are female!



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