

Fact sheet - World Hypertension Day- 17th of May 2022

Hypertension – or elevated blood pressure – is a serious medical condition that significantly increases the risk of heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure, blindness and arteriosclerosis. Hypertension is one of the commonest preventable causes of premature morbidity and mortality worldwide.

Hypertension can be defined using specific systolic and diastolic blood pressure levels. An estimated 1.4 billion people worldwide have high blood pressure, but just 14% have it under control.

Hypertension is a major risk factor for Cardio-vascular diseases, which accounts for one third (34%) of total deaths in Sri Lanka. Approximately 47% of heart diseases and 56% of strokes are attributable to hypertension.

The Sri Lanka STEPS (2015) survey revealed that 26% of people aged 18-69 years were having blood pressure more than 140/90 mmHg or was on treatment for hypertension (25.4% of men and 26.7% of women). Of them, only 38% aware that they had hypertension and only 28% were under treatment. Furthermore, one third (31%) of the population had never had their blood pressure checked. As the demographics of Sri Lanka is shifting towards an older population, the prevalence of hypertension and requirement for its treatment will continue to rise.

The “World Hypertension Day” is commemorated on the 17th of May every year, with the aim of raising community awareness regarding hypertension prevention and care. The 2022 World Hypertension Day theme is “**Measure your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer**”. The emphasis is to create awareness in the community and among the healthcare workers, regarding inaccurate blood pressure measurement which could lead to incorrect diagnosis and inappropriate treatment. Directorate of NCD has developed a guideline for medical officers of primary and secondary /tertiary health care level to enhance the skills on accurate BP measurement procedure. **(Annexure I)**

Drug treatment of hypertension alone cannot provide a sustainable solution. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is essential to prevent and control hypertension. The following habits and factors can cause high blood pressure.

- High salt consumption
- Smoking tobacco
- Alcohol consumption
- Physical inactivity
- Overweight/obesity
- Genetic predisposition
- Stress

How to Prevent High Blood Pressure

- Healthy Diet - low in salt
- Cessation of tobacco smoking and Alcohol consumption
- Increase physical activity
- Adequate sleep
- Screen for blood pressure Twice a year using the correct procedure

Theme: Measure your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer

The Directorate of Non-Communicable Diseases, Sri Lanka College of Cardiologists, Sri Lanka Association of Stroke have also planned numerous activities to commemorate the World Hypertension Day 2022.

Contact for more Information:

- Dr. Vindya Kumarapeli
Consultant Community Physician
Director Non-Communicable Diseases
Ministry of Health
0718965277
- Dr. Shanthi Gunawardana
Consultant Community Physician
Directorate of Non-Communicable Diseases
Ministry of Health
0714325122
- Dr. Harsha Gunasekara
Consultant Neuro Physician
Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital
President Stroke Association
0718048587
- Dr. Sanjeewa Rajapakse
Consultant Cardiologist
Colombo North Teaching Hospital
0777227738