

The Dangers of Hypertension

INTRO

Do you really need that extra shake of salt on your fries? Because sodium is not your friend.

That's according to a [study](#) published in the Journal of Internal Medicine that showed any significant reduction in the consumption of dietary salt can improve hypertension.

Take VO

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), nine out of 10 Americans consume too much sodium and they don't even know it. The average person eats more than 3,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day – the AHA recommends no more than 2,300 mg a day. Reducing sodium by just 1,000 mg a day can improve blood pressure and decrease the risk of cardiac issues.

Lauren Hargrave, a physician assistant with OSF HealthCare, says hypertension is a serious issue that impacts people of all ages.

(((SOT)))

Lauren Hargrave, Physician Assistant, OSF HealthCare

“A lot of times the first time people hear that they have high blood pressures is in an office visit after we take vitals. They don't always know that they have high blood pressure at home and we call it the silent killer because a lot of times it is something that's not presenting with symptoms. We're telling people that they have high blood pressure and explaining the importance of treatment. It is very treatable with medications with lifestyle changes, but if it's not recognized, that's when it can become dangerous.” (:31)

VO TAG

The ideal blood pressure for adults is a systolic pressure (top number) of less than 120 and a diastolic pressure (bottom number) of less than 80.

According to Hargrave, the best way to reduce the sodium in your diet is to stay clear of prepackaged, processed and prepared foods. Pay close attention to food labels – foods that have the most salt are breads, pizza, sandwiches, cold cuts, soup and tacos.

Exercise helps with overall heart health, which can help lower blood pressure. It also helps with weight reduction, which can also improve blood pressure. The key is paying attention to what you eat and make modifications when necessary.