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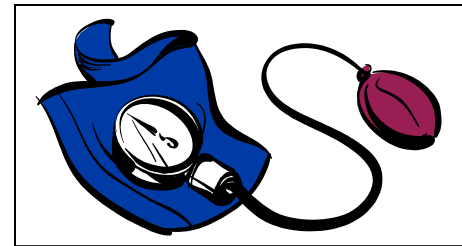
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**NATIONAL BLOOD PRESSURE MONTH**

**Lifestyle Factors:** Living right can help people live healthier. Doing just six things right can lower your risk of developing high blood pressure. Doing even just one of the six lowers the risk some.

1. Keeping a normal weight
2. Exercising an average of 30 minutes a day
3. Eating a healthy diet
4. Drinking alcohol in moderation
5. Avoiding over-the-counter pain relievers
6. Taking 400 micrograms or more of supplemental folic acid



**Lowering Salt in Your Diet:** High blood pressure makes the heart work harder and can lead to heart disease, stroke, heart failure, and kidney disease. For many people, salt contributes to high blood pressure. These populations include African Americans, people with high blood pressure, kidney disease, or diabetes and people who are middle-age or older. Always follow your doctor's recommendation about how much sodium you can have daily.

Everyone needs some salt to function but nearly all Americans consume more salt than they need. Also known as sodium chloride, salt helps maintain the body's balance of fluids. Salt also functions in many foods as a preservative, by helping to prevent spoilage and keeping certain foods safe to eat. The natural salt in food accounts for, on average, about 10 percent of total intake. The salt we add at the table or while cooking adds another 5 to 10 percent. About 75 percent of our salt intake comes from salt added to processed foods by manufacturers and salt that cooks add to foods at restaurants.

Check with your doctor before using salt substitutes. Many salt substitutes contain potassium chloride, which could be harmful to people with certain medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease and heart disease. Some people are more sensitive to the effects of salt than others.

Your 2009-2010 Health Care Spending Account Claims must be filed on or before June 30, 2010. Please remember to incur any expenses on or before June 15<sup>th</sup> so you do not lose your funds!

Go to <http://icubabenefits.org> for claim forms.

## Important Information to Improve Your Health

### National Physical Fitness Month

Physical activity has long been known to bestow such benefits as helping to maintain a healthy weight and reduce stress. Regular exercise, as simple as a brisk 30 to 45 minute walk five times a week can boost the body's immune system, increasing the circulation of natural killer cells that fight off viruses and bacteria. Medical experts say inactivity poses as great a health risk as smoking, contributing to heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, depression, arthritis, and osteoporosis. Studies show that regular, brisk exercise:

- Lowers the risk of **stroke** by 27%.
- Reduces the incidence of **diabetes** by approximately 50%.
- Reduces the incidence of **high-blood pressure** by approximately 40%.
- Can reduce mortality and the risk of recurrent **breast cancer** by approximately 50%.
- Can lower the risk of **colon cancer** by over 60%.
- Can reduce the risk of developing **Alzheimer's disease** by approximately 40%.
- Can decrease **depression** as effectively as Prozac or behavioral therapy.

So, how do you fit exercise into an already packed schedule? One way is to rethink the amount of exercise that counts as exercise. Often we will reason that if we can't carve out a solid hour for vigorous exertion, we might as well not do anything. Even a 10-minute break for dancing, marching in place or other low-impact exercise can have benefits. Some suggestions for working exercise even more smoothly into one's daily routine are:

- Park farther away from the office.
- Have lunch at least a half-mile walk away from your office.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Conduct meetings on the move.
- Squeeze in mini-workouts while watching TV or even waiting in line.
- Make after-work hours family time....play with your kids or pets.



***Remember.....***

***Start small. Anything is better than nothing.***

***The hardest part about exercise isn't the work; it's being motivated to do it.***