



Shake Rattle and Roll

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HYPERTENSION

IN THIS ISSUE

Spring into a Healthy Summer

As the weather gets warmer, it's time to think about ways to support continued success. New fruits and vegetables are coming into season. Changing your routine may be just what the doctor ordered. Take a friend and walk or exercise in a different location. Try something new that's always interested you. Many yoga studios and other organized exercise and health and well-being centers offer a low or no cost "try-out" session. Revisit your meds, are you on schedule?

called Dopamine. Dopamine produces an agent that lowers blood pressure. This opens up new avenues for therapies that are remote-controlled via the subconscious. While scientists are still studying this association, feel good as often as you can. Listen to your favorite song, spend time with loved ones, write a letter to an old friend, or tell someone your favorite story.



The 411 on Research with Dr. Mai

Don't Worry, Be Happy – Was Bob Marley Talking about BP? Can happiness lower you blood pressure? Researchers in Zurich, Switzerland say yes. Like many of our emotions, happiness produces hormones. The happy hormone is



Look Who's Talking!

Ever wonder who's the face behind the reminder calls you may receive? It's Nancy! She's been with Shake Rattle and Roll since the beginning and at the KP Division of Research for over 20 years. Please send in your questionnaires or Nancy will provide a gentle nudge.



Healthy Living - Eat in Season
Summer fruits and veggies



Medication – Enhanced Monitoring
Myths about blood pressure meds



The Doctor's Corner
What you need to know about your medication: ACE Inhibitors



Eat in Season



Look for summer fruits and vegetables at farmers markets and in produce departments for the best flavor (and greatest value) during the summer season.

Remember: It is recommended that you eat 4-5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Fresh, frozen, dried, canned and 100% juice- it all counts!

Fruit	Peak Season	Look For
Apricots	June - July	Golden yellow; plump; firm.
Blueberries	June - August	Firm; plump; full-colored; bright, clean, fresh appearance.
Figs	July - Sept	Fairly soft to touch. Use at once, spoils quickly. Sour odor indicates overripe fruit.
Kiwi	June - August	Soft to touch, like avocado.
Mangoes	April - August	Solid and not too soft to touch. Can vary in size from a plum to an apple and in color from yellow to red. Smooth skin often speckled with black.
Cantaloupes	May - Sept	Color and aroma best guides. Delicate aroma; thick netting that stands out; yellow-tinged skin under the netting.
Watermelons	May - August	Dull surfaces with cream-colored undersides; symmetrical shape.
Nectarines / Peaches	June – Sept	Plump; fairly firm depending on type. Peaches: Skin color white or yellow with a red blush.
Plums	June - Sept	Plump; soft enough to yield to slight pressure. Avoid shriveled or hard plums.
Vegetables	Peak Season	Look For
Asparagus	March - June	Tightly closed buds. Straight, tender, rich green stalks. Avoid open tips.
Lima beans	April - August	Bright color for the variety. Crisp, dark green, well-filled pods.
Corn	May - Sept	Fresh-leaved, green husks. Plump, milky kernels. Avoid cobs with shrunken kernels.
Cucumbers	May - August	Bright, shiny green; firm; well-shaped.
Eggplant	August - Sept	Firm; heavy; smooth; even dark purple. Free of bruises or cuts.
Okra	May - Sept	Tender, bright-green, bruise-free pods, less than 4 1/2 inches long.
Peas, green	April - July	Well-filled; bright green. Swollen; avoid light colored or gray-flecked pods.
Radishes	May - July	Medium-sized (3/4- to 1-inch diameter); good red color; plump; round; firm; crisp.
Squash	June - August	Bright color; smooth, glossy skin. Heavy for the size; firm; well-shaped.
Tomatoes	May - August	Well-formed; blemish-free; plump. Over all rich red color and slight softness.

Blood Pressure Medicine Myths:



There are a number of myths surrounding blood pressure medications. It's important you know the facts.

Myth: Once my blood pressure is under control, I can stop the medicine.

Truth: Once you stop your medicine, your blood pressure will no longer be controlled. Medicine only helps you control, not cure your blood pressure.

Myth: The more medicines you take, the more side effects.

Truth: Blood pressure medications do not usually interact with each other and cause more side effects. If you get side effects, it is usually due to a particular medicine, not the number of medicines you take.



**Daniel Cheung, Pharm D,
KP Oakland Medical Center**

Myth: You only need one blood pressure medicine to control your blood pressure.

Truth: There are many systems in your body that help control blood pressure. Each medicine works on a different system and only lowers blood pressure by 10-20 points. On average, most patients need 2-3 medicines to control their blood pressure.

Myth: Brand name drugs are better than generic.

Truth: Once the drug patent expires, the FDA only approves generic drugs that have been proven to work just like the brand name drugs. Brand name drugs costs hundreds of millions of dollars to research, develop, market and promote. That is why they are so much more expensive than generic drugs. Since the generic drug company doesn't have to spend as much money on the original drug like the brand name company, they can sell the drug for much cheaper.

Myth: Natural products are safer than prescription drugs.

Truth: Herbal remedies and supplements are not FDA regulated. This means they have not been tested as rigorously as prescription drugs for effectiveness and safety.



**PJ, RN Enhanced Monitoring Arm,
KP Oakland Medical Center**

In addition, "natural" products can also have side effects and drug interactions just like prescription drugs.

Myth: There are natural home remedies that I can use to control blood pressure.

Truth: Though there are many "natural" remedies that are promoted to lower blood pressure, there is no existing evidence that shows any "natural" remedies are effective alternatives to blood pressure medicines.



**Gary Choy, Pharm D,
KP Oakland Medical Center**

The Doctor's Corner: What you need to know about your blood pressure medicines

ACE Inhibitors

Lisinopril is often used to treat high blood pressure. Lisinopril is an ACE Inhibitor. This column previously addressed thiazide medicines. Hydrochlorothiazide and Chlorthalidone are examples of thiazide medicines.

An ACE Inhibitor and a thiazide medicine, taken together, can be an especially effective combination for treating high blood pressure. In fact, the combination can be so effective that a once daily tablet, Lisinopril-Hydrochlorothiazide, containing both medicines, is a very convenient option for many people with high blood pressure.

And no, ACE Inhibitors won't get in the way of your poker game! "ACE" stands for **A**ngiotensin **C**onverting **E**nzyme. An ACE Inhibitor blocks (inhibits) this enzyme. By blocking this enzyme, a group of hormones known as the Renin Angiotensin System is prevented from raising blood pressure.

Why do these medicines work so well together? Thiazides, in addition to helping make arteries less stiff, also help to clear excess salt from the body. In helping to clear salt, thiazides sometimes cause potassium to be "spilled" into the urine. ACE Inhibitors like

Lisinopril, however, help the body hold on to potassium. It's almost as if these two medicines work together like a hand in glove. There is a synergy between these two classes of medicines. The combination is usually more effective than twice the effect of either one alone.

ACE inhibitors, when given without a thiazide, sometimes don't work as well in African Americans as in others. However, combining an ACE Inhibitor with a thiazide works equally well, regardless of race or ethnicity.

For some people at increased risk of kidney problems, stroke or heart attack, ACE inhibitors may lower those risks, even if blood pressure is normal.

A rare reaction is swelling of the face, eyes, lips, tongue or throat. Though rare, this requires immediate medical attention. ACE inhibitors are not safe in pregnancy or while breast-feeding and so should not be taken by women who may become pregnant, are pregnant or are breast-feeding.

ACE inhibitors can cause a dry "throat" cough for some. This is not dangerous. For a few people, this can be bothersome enough to want to switch to a different medicine.

ACE inhibitors are an important class of blood pressure medicines. When taken along with a thiazide an ACE inhibitor can be especially effective.



Dr. Joseph Young, Internist,
KP Oakland Medical Center



@Strokestudy

"Rockin' Robin Tweet, Tweet!"

We're on Twitter! We're trying a novel method for getting the word out on these issues. We Tweet important facts about high blood pressure, stroke, research and health tips. If you're on Twitter, please follow us @strokestudy. You can also "Tweedle lee deedle lee lee" on over to our "Bring it Down" website and see our Twitter feed there!



Shake, Rattle and Roll is part of a larger research program named "Bring It Down," focusing on reducing disparities in hypertension and stroke and is funded by the NINDS.

www.bringitdownstudy.org