



# Shake Rattle and Roll

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND HYPERTENSION

IN THIS ISSUE

## The Study

Having a healthy blood pressure is important. Unfortunately, it's common that African Americans have uncontrolled blood pressure which can lead to serious health problems, such as stroke.

High blood pressure is likely the most important controllable risk factor for stroke.

The Shake, Rattle and Roll study is currently underway at Kaiser Permanente's Oakland Medical Center. African-American patients with high blood pressure are participating in two interventions:

**Shake the salt habit.** A personalized diet and lifestyle intervention, delivered by phone, is guiding participants toward healthy changes using the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan.

**Rattle blood pressure medications.** Dedicated pharmacists and nurses are working closely with study participants to make sure that each patient is taking the medications that work best for them, while helping them identify

and overcome barriers to taking medications as prescribed.

Taking what they learn from the "shake" and "rattle" interventions, Kaiser Permanente and UCSF will **"roll" out** the best strategies for controlling high blood pressure and stroke to their members, patients and other communities.



### Meet the Researchers

Mai N. Nguyen-Huynh, MD MAS, is a board certified vascular neurologist. She is a research scientist at the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research. She is also the Director of Kaiser Primary Stroke Centers in the Diablo Service Area, and an assistant professor of neurology at the University of California San Francisco. Her research interests include stroke and transient ischemic attack epidemiology with a focus on acute management and outcomes of transient ischemic attack, large artery atherosclerotic disease and racial-ethnic variation in stroke risks and outcomes.



**Healthy Living – tips for the holidays**  
Holiday G.I.F.T.S. – 5 health tips for surviving the holidays



**Medication – Enhanced Monitoring**  
See the Shake Rattle and Roll participant's question corner



**The Doctor's Corner**  
What you need to know about your medication: Thiazides.

## G.I.F.T.S. for the Holidays

**GET MOVING** – Stay active to reduce stress and balance out those extra calories.

**INDULGE WISELY** - Serve up appetizer-sized helpings of each dish instead of full servings.

**FOCUSED BREATHING** – Holidays can be a time of joy as well as stress. Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress and help control your blood pressure.

**TAKE THE FOCUS OFF FOOD** - Plan fun events where food isn't the main attraction.

**SHARE THE HEALTH** – Experiment with a healthier version of a traditional dish or bring something new.



APRIL – LIFESTYLE COACH

"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it."

## A Whole Year Ahead with Whole Grains

Whole grains are nutritional powerhouses. When you eat the whole grain you get the whole kernel, with the outer bran and the germ, and all the nutritional benefits inside. They are packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and protein. Make half your grains **WHOLE GRAINS!**

Look for these stamps when shopping



**BASIC Whole Grain Stamp**  
Some of the grain is whole grain



**100% Whole Grain stamp**  
All of the grain is whole grain



KIM BERLY – LIFESTYLE COACH

"Health isn't about being "perfect" with food or exercise or herbs. Health is about balancing those things with your desires. It's about nourishing your spirit as well as your body."

# Managing Your Medicine



You're much more likely to take your medicine, and stay on it, if you understand how it helps you. If you have trouble remembering to take your medicines, we have tools to help.

People with ongoing health conditions may take many different kinds of drugs. This can take medication management, taking the right medications at the right time, avoiding drug interactions and side effects

To get the best results and avoid unnecessary risks, all medicine, including over-the-counter products, needs to be taken as prescribed.



Daniel Cheung, Pharm D  
KP Oakland Medical Center

## Remembering to take your medications

Having a system that makes sense to you can help you keep track of your prescriptions.

- Organize your medications each week using a pill box. Ask your pharmacist where to get one.
- Keep track using a calendar or chart.
- Set a regular routine for taking your medications (such as at mealtime, bedtime, or when you brush your teeth).
- Place sticky note reminders someplace you will notice.
- Try using your watch, clock, or phone alarm.

## Questions from a Shake, Rattle and Roll participants

**Q: "I'm afraid my body will become dependent on these medications. Will this happen?"**

**A:** Your body will -not become dependent on the medications. The medications are simply a helping hand for your body to control the blood pressure.

**Q: "Is there a natural supplement I can get at the health food store to help my blood pressure instead of prescription drugs?"**



PJ - REGISTERED NURSE

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead. ."



GARY CHOY - PHARMACIST

"Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. But today is a gift. That is why it called the PRESENT."

**A:** Many "natural supplements" do not have the same proven effectiveness as the prescription medications, and may have side effects as well. If you have a question or concern about a natural supplement, please speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

# The Doctor's Corner

## What you need to know about your blood pressure medicines

Thiazides are a very important tool in our high blood pressure treatment toolbox. The two most commonly used thiazides are hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ) and chlorthalidone. Not only are these medicines very effective at controlling high blood pressure, when given together with other blood pressure medicines, they help the other medicines to work even better. So, when taken with or without other blood pressure medicines, thiazides are a very important part of the treatment plan.

When HCTZ or chlorthalidone is used, it is very important to use the right dose. While lower doses are sometimes enough, the International Society for Hypertension in Blacks (ISHIB) recommends that thiazides be used in doses of up to 50 mg of HCTZ or 25 mg of chlorthalidone. If lower doses do not lower high blood pressure, it is very important to raise the dose up to the limits recommended by ISHIB.

Not only do HCTZ and chlorthalidone lower blood pressure, they also prevent strokes and heart attacks. The ALLHAT trial (Antihypertensive and Lipid Lowering Treatment to Prevent Heart Attack Trial, the

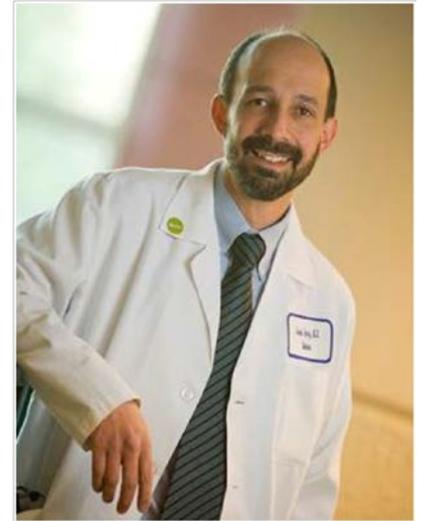
largest high blood pressure clinical study ever conducted, showed that thiazides were more effective than other agents at preventing strokes in African-Americans with high blood pressure.

HCTZ and chlorthalidone are often called "water pills" but this is not really how they work. Thiazides work to lower blood pressure by relaxing the arteries. Most people who take thiazides tolerate the medicines very well.

HCTZ and chlorthalidone can lower the amount of potassium in the blood so eating a lot of fruits and vegetables can help to make sure you get enough potassium in your diet. Sometimes people that are taking HCTZ or chlorthalidone also take a potassium supplement.

Thiazides also help the kidneys to get rid of extra salt. Because African-American patients with high blood pressure are more likely to be "salt sensitive", thiazides are particularly important in the treatment of high blood pressure in African-Americans.

Because thiazides are long acting, they only need to be taken once a day. Most people take them in the morning.



Dr. Joseph Young, Internist  
KP Oakland Medical Center

Taking HCTZ or chlorthalidone, at the right dose, alone or together with other blood pressure medicines, can be one of the most important things you can do to keep your blood pressure controlled and to stay healthy.

## BRING IT DOWN!



Shake Rattle and Roll is part of a large Research Program focusing on health disparities funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Visit the Bring It Down Website for more information about Shake Rattle and Roll and other components of the program.

[www.bringitdownstudy.org](http://www.bringitdownstudy.org)

