10 Fascinating Facts About Stroke and High Blood Pressure

Did you know that weakened arteries in the brain, resulting from high blood pressure, increase the risk for stroke? Here are ten more fascinating facts that link these two conditions and outline the importance of keeping blood pressure under control.

1. **26% of the world’s population have high blood pressure**

High blood pressure is more common than you might think. Approximately 972 million people are estimated to suffer from the condition worldwide and, with often little or no symptoms, many more are undiagnosed. (1)

2. **High blood pressure figures are expected to rise 29% by 2025**

Lifestyle factors, such as physical inactivity, a salt-rich diet with highly processed and fatty foods, and alcohol and tobacco use, are at the centre of an increase in high blood pressure worldwide. This is spreading at an alarming rate from developed countries to emerging economies such as India and China. (2)
3. **Heart disease and stroke are the first and second leading causes of death**

The rise in the number of adults with high blood pressure is directly linked to the incidence of deaths from heart disease and stroke, two of the biggest killers in the world. In fact, high blood pressure has been found to be the key thing people could change to reduce numbers of disability-related deaths worldwide in 2013. (3)

4. **90-95% of adult cases of high blood pressure are primary**

There are two types of high blood pressure: primary and secondary. Primary, which may develop as a result of environmental or genetic causes, accounts for 90-95% of adult cases. While secondary, caused by other underlying conditions or medications, only accounts for up to 10%. (3)

5. **People over 40 should have blood pressure checked every year**

Regular blood pressure monitoring is the key to preventing and managing high blood pressure. The Government recommends blood pressure is checked every two years, once over the age of 18, and then every year, after you turn 40. (4)

6. **Normal blood pressure should be lower than 120/80**

Your blood pressure reading consists of two figures: systolic and diastolic. A normal reading should be lower than 120/80. High blood pressure is diagnosed if the first number (systolic pressure) goes above 140 and the second number (diastolic pressure) goes above 90. (3)

7. **Around one billion people are affected worldwide**

High blood pressure affects around one billion people and causes an estimated 9.4 million deaths every year. But for every 10 people diagnosed with the condition, another seven don’t know they have it. That’s why it’s so important to get your blood pressure checked every year. (5)

8. **High blood pressure is more common in the over-65s**

Many factors influence your likelihood of developing high blood pressure. Some are modifiable – for instance, you could stop drinking alcohol or smoking. Others
are non-modifiable, such as old age: people over the age of 65 are more likely to suffer from it. (3)

9. **There are four main groups of blood pressure medications**

The main types of blood pressure medication are called angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors; angiotensin-2 receptor blockers; calcium channel blockers; and thiazide-like diuretics. Your doctor may need to try different combinations to find out what works best for you. (6)

10. **It’s easy to prevent high blood pressure and reduce stroke risk**

There are several different things you can do to reduce your chance of stroke, caused by high blood pressure. These include losing weight; exercising more; limiting your caffeine, salt and alcohol intakes; reducing stress; and getting a good night’s sleep. (4)

**References:**


