



ASSURE[®] BRILLIANCE

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE & SUPPORT PROGRAM

Monitoring blood pressure (BP) in your patients with diabetes

With the onset of diabetes comes a gamut of compounding health concerns. It is very important to monitor blood glucose levels regularly and implement healthy diet and exercise patterns in order to stave off the development of future health problems. Cardiovascular complications may result from high BP and poor blood glucose control. Help your patients be successful by encouraging a diet that is low in sodium and high in heart-healthy fruits and vegetables.

Current BP guidelines

The new BP guidelines have sparked quite a debate. The Eighth Joint National Committee (JNC 8) panel members updated the hypertension guidelines in 2014. The panel recommended that the BP goal for hypertensive individuals over the age of 60 should be less than 150/90 mm Hg, an increase from the previous guideline of 140/90 mm Hg. The panel also suggested an increase – to 140/90 mm Hg from 130/90 mm Hg – for individuals with chronic diseases. For hypertensive individuals under the age of 60, the panel advised a BP goal of less than 140/90 mm Hg. There is insufficient evidence; however, for the latter recommendation, so it is based on expert opinion.¹

While many experts have weighed in on the new guidelines, many still do not agree. The previous BP guidelines had been in place for 30 years, so many are asking, “why change it now?” Some doctors are concerned that the increased guidelines will lead patients to neglect taking their medications.² The current panel; however, defends their decision citing research findings that show simply administering medications to reduce blood pressure does not necessarily reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications. By emphasizing the importance of diet and lifestyle changes, patients may be able to reduce their medications.¹

You can read more about these updated guidelines in the following publication:

James P, Oparil S, Carter B et al. 2014 Evidence-Based Guideline for the Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults: Report from the Panel Members Appointed to the Eighth Joint National Committee (JNC 8). JAMA. 2014; 311(5):507-520

Current diet recommendations

Meeting the new BP guidelines can be accomplished with medication and by implementing simple dietary changes. Following the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan can be a key element to reducing the risk of cardiovascular complications. Studies indicate that the DASH eating plan lowers high BP and improves blood lipid levels.³ Using age, gender and activity level as factors, medical providers can customize a diet for a patient. Based on the appropriate calorie level, providers can determine the number of servings from each food group that a patient should consume. For every calorie level, there should be a sodium consumption limit of <2,300 mg/day.⁴ For certain groups – including adults ages 51 and older, African Americans, people with diabetes or chronic kidney diseases and individuals who already have high BP – this level should not exceed 1,500 mg/day.³

In order to reduce sodium intake, it is important to limit salt in the diet. Some suggestions for doing so, while still maintaining the great taste of food, is to add herbs, spices or salt-free seasonings. Even adding a little lemon or lime can make a big difference.⁵

To see a complete list of foods and serving sizes included in the DASH eating plan, visit <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/followdash.html>

References

- 1) James P, Oparil S, Carter B, et al. 2014 Evidence-Based Guideline for the Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults. JAMA. 2014; 311(5):507-520.
- 2) New Blood Pressure Guidelines Spark Debate. Richmond university Medical Center web site. http://www.rumcsi.org/Main/RUMCIntheNews/New_Blood_Pressure_Guidelines_Spark_Debate_39.aspx. Published February 7, 2014. Accessed June 13, 2014.
- 3) What is the DASH Eating Plan? National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/>. Published June 6, 2014.
- 4) Following the DASH Eating Plan. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/followdash.html>. Published June 6, 2014.
- 5) The DASH Eating Plan as Part of a Heart Healthy Lifestyle. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/lifestyle.html>. Published June 6, 2014.