



HEALTH CAPSULE | No.59 | 2018

Avoid the Silent Killer!

May 17 – World Hypertension Day

High blood pressure (or hypertension) is the pressure or force of the blood pushing against the walls of blood vessels (arteries) that is higher than normal. It is measured by two numbers: one represents the pressure of blood when the heart beats and pumps blood (systolic pressure), and the other refers to the pressure when the heart is at rest, between two beats (diastolic pressure). In the general population, a high blood pressure is 140/90 mm Hg or higher (140 over 90 millimetres of mercury).

FACTS & NUMBERS IN CANADA

7.5M

7.5 million Canadians live with hypertension.

9/10

Nine adults out of ten will develop high blood pressure in their lifetime.

1/3

One person with hypertension out of three would have a normal blood pressure if less salt was consumed.

50%

Half of those with high blood pressure are not aware they have it.

**Heart
disease
& stroke**

Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death and hospitalization. Elevated blood pressure is related to the development of cardiovascular diseases with cardiovascular mortality doubling with each 20/10 mmHg increase in blood pressure.

TAKE ACTION

Eat healthily and reduce salt consumption.

Eat more fruits and vegetables.

Limit alcohol intake.

Don't smoke.

Be physically active.

Maintain a healthy body weight.

Check your blood pressure once every two years or more frequently when recommended by a healthcare professional.

If you are being treated for hypertension, take your medicine even when you start to feel better – follow treatment advice from a healthcare professional.



A Closer Look at Vitamins and Minerals

True or False

1. Hard cheeses like cheddar are a better source of calcium than softer ones (i.e., brie).

True. It is the calcium that gives cheese its firmness. Hence, hard cheeses contain more calcium than those with a soft texture. A portion of firm cheese (50 g) contains between 330 to 500 mg of calcium which represents about a third of the daily value for a healthy adult. Among dairy products, only milk and some yogurts and cheeses contain D vitamin which facilitates calcium absorption.

Top 10 calcium-rich cheeses: 1) Romano 2) Gruyère 3) Swiss & Emmental cheese 4) Provolone 5) Monterey Jack 6) partly skimmed Mozzarella 7) Cheddar 8) Munster 9) Gouda 10) Colby

2. A cup of spinach (250 ml) contains as much iron as a beef steak (100 g).

True. However, iron from meat is much better absorbed than when it comes from vegetables. In fact, in equal amount, our body absorbs ten times more iron from consuming beef than spinach.

3. D vitamin can be synthesized by skin exposure to sunlight.

True. Simply exposing the face, arms and hands to sunlight for 15 minutes every day is enough for the skin to produce D vitamin. However, due to the lack of sun in winter Canadians need to get their D vitamin in food.

D vitamin can be found in few foods like milk, and also in smaller quantity in margarine, eggs, chicken liver, sardine, salmon, herring, mackerel, swordfish and fish oils (herring oil and cod liver).

D vitamin plays a vital role in the absorption of calcium and maintenance of strong and healthy teeth and bones.

4. The more colourful the fruits and vegetables, the more nutritious.

True. Colourful fruits and vegetables (blue/purple, green, red, yellow/orange) provide several nutritional elements to protect the human body against the effects of aging, heart diseases and cancer. Besides being responsible for the colours in fruits and vegetables, these nutritional elements are good for you. For example, the red pigment of the tomato, the lycopene, helps prevent prostate cancer.

5. Beer is a good source of B vitamin.

False. With the same calorie intake, two slices of whole wheat bread have ten times more B1 vitamins, two times more B6 vitamins and 30% more folic acid than a bottle of beer (260 ml). If you believe that a night out drinking is a good way to stock up on vitamins, think again! The opposite is true: the more beer you drink, the more your needs in many types of B vitamins increase.

6. The egg white has most of the egg's nutritional content.

False. Nutrients from the entire egg are unevenly distributed between the white and the yolk. Even though the white provides $\frac{3}{4}$ of proteins, the biggest portion of potassium, riboflavin and niacin and contains less fat, the yolk is rich in vitamins and minerals: B12 vitamin, folic acid, pantothenic acid, A vitamin, E vitamin, phosphorus and zinc.

7. Frozen vegetables are less nutritious than fresh vegetables.

False. Between harvesting and the time it takes to reach consumers, fresh vegetables lose a lot of their vitamins and minerals. Conversely, freezing vegetables as soon as they are harvested can preserve their nutritional value until consumption.

Source: Extenso (Université de Montréal's nutrition reference centre)