

# Canadians are misinformed about high blood pressure - "The Silent Killer"

A majority of Canadians are at risk of developing high blood pressure but know little about "the silent killer", a recent survey revealed.

The National High Blood Pressure Quiz showed that 61 per cent of Canadians who participated in the computer survey are in the medium to high risk categories of developing high blood pressure.

The findings of the survey also indicated that high blood pressure is generally misunderstood by Canadians, but particularly among those who already suffer from high blood pressure.

More than 10,000 Canadians completed The National High Blood Pressure Quiz between May and August, 1990. The Quiz, an interactive touch-screen computer, is located in pharmacies across the country. The Quiz asked a series of true and false questions and also assessed if an individual was in a low, medium or high risk of developing high blood pressure.

More than one out of 10 respondents (12 per cent) said they have been diagnosed as having high blood pressure. The incidence of high blood pressure was particularly high among those over 55 years old, with upper weight ranges and among those who consume large quantities of alcohol. Most Canadians (53 per cent) are in a medium risk category, while eight per cent are high risk and a little more than a quarter (27 per cent) are in a low risk category.

## Stress not the culprit

The survey revealed that 76 per cent of Canadians believe that people who are under a lot of stress tend to develop high blood pressure. In fact, high blood pressure is not caused by stress, although stress can raise blood pressure temporarily.

More than one-third (34 per cent) of the respondents incorrectly believe that people can feel when their blood pressure is high and that this is when they should take their medication.

## Confusion about medication

A more alarming finding is 39 per cent of respondents who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure believe "most people can feel when their blood pressure is high and this is when they should take their medication". In fact, the disease is often termed "the silent killer" because it displays no outward symptoms to alert people to the fact that they have it. Left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to heart attacks, strokes or kidney failure.

"I am alarmed to learn that people may be tampering with their medication and taking it only when they "feel" their blood pressure is high," said Bill Kassel, a Toronto pharmacist, who was one of the first pharmacists to use the Quiz. "We take great care to make sure patients understand medication for high blood pressure must be taken regularly, as prescribed, whether they feel well or not. If they don't, the consequences could be extremely harmful, if not fatal."

The Quiz is a joint project between the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association and Nordic Laboratories Inc., a Quebec-based pharmaceutical company. Nordic Laboratories Inc. manufactures a leading high blood pressure drug, Cardizem® SR.

## Canadians seeking better health

"We believe Canadians want better health and are motivated to look for health care information," said Vicente Anido, President of Nordic Laboratories

Inc. "That's one reason why we decided to create a quiz on high blood pressure."

The good news is that most Canadians, and particularly those with high blood pressure, have had their blood pressure checked within the last few years. A majority of Canadians (70 per cent) say they have had their blood pressure checked since 1988. Health care professionals recommend that blood pressure be checked a minimum of once every two years.

## Tips to help

And most Canadians who took the Quiz are aware that alcohol consumption, excess weight and diet play a role in high blood pressure. Here are some tips to help keep your blood pressure at a safe level:

- \* Avoid drinking more than two standard alcoholic drinks per day (four ounces of wine, one ounce of liquor or 12 ounces of beer).
- \* Make sure your diet is not too high in salt.
- \* Eat potassium-rich foods, such as fresh and frozen fruits, vegetables, potatoes and low-fat dairy products.
- \* Keep your weight in a healthy range (your doctor will be able to tell you what weight is right for you).
- \* Don't smoke.

If you are interested in assessing your risk of high blood pressure or testing your knowledge of the condition, check your local pharmacy window for a poster indicating that the Quiz is there. Or speak to your pharmacist or doctor about your blood pressure and what you can do to keep it at a safe level.

The survey results were analysed by Insight Canada Research. The results are accurate to plus or minus 1.8 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

# Schreiber Recreation

**Learn to Skate** - beginning Jan. 21 - Mon. & Thurs. 10 - 11 a.m. Children must wear helmets and be accompanied by an adult. Registration must be received prior to attending the first class.

**Aerobics** - First sessions have commenced. Mon & Wed - 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. and Sun, Tues and Thurs - 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Registration must be received prior to attending first class.

**Level I & II Coaching Certification Program (Theory Courses)** - Now accepting names interested in attending one of these workshops. When enough interest has been received, the courses will be finalized. A minimum of 12 persons is required.

**Winter Carnival** - A number of popular programs from last years carnival will be offered again this year along with new and exciting programs for the entire family. Will be held on Fri. Feb 22 - Sun. March 3. Brochures to be distributed in early February. Pre-registration will be required for a number of events. Residents are asked to register before the deadline in order to ensure their participation in the activities of their choice.

**Upcoming Events**  
 Jan. 26 & 27 - Bantam Invitational Tournament  
 Feb. 2 & 3 - Atom Invitational Tournament  
 Feb. 9 & 10 - Midget Invitational Tournament

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Chantel Ryan is happy to announce the arrival of her sister, **BRANDI LEA**, born at McCausland Hospital Dec. 7, 1990. Proud parents are Mark and Janice Ryan. Grandparents Mrs. Teresa Ryan of Killaloe, Ontario.

## THANK YOU

I would like to thank Dr. Wilkes of Terrace Bay and Dr. Wyantt of Thunder Bay for their care during my recent surgery. I would also like to thank the nurses of both hospitals and all my friends and family for the cards and flowers that were sent. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

**Lucille Denomme**



Ministry of Revenue Ontario

## TAX FACTS

### Some Ontario Retail Sales Tax (RST) Changes You Should Know About

Recently, the Ministry of Revenue announced that the Province of Ontario will not charge Retail Sales Tax (RST) on the federal Goods and Services Tax (GST).

If you have paid RST on top of GST, you may receive a refund from your retailer.

The following changes became effective January 1, 1991:

- To offset some of the costs incurred by vendors as a result of the GST, the Ontario government is increasing the amount of compensation to vendors for the collection and remittance of RST.
- The RST audit and refund period has been increased from three to four years.
- The refund of RST on goods taken out of Ontario by tourists and on transient accommodation will be amended.

If you want to know more about these changes in the Retail Sales Tax Act, call your local RST office listed in the blue pages of your telephone book, or the Ministry of Revenue's multilingual Telephone Information Centre, toll-free:

Metro Toronto	965-8470
All Other Areas	1-800-263-7965
French Language Enquiries	1-800-668-5821
Telephone Device for the Deaf	1-800-263-7776

Pour des renseignements en français, composer le 1-800-668-5821.