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My High Blood Pressure

By Steve Alan

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by: **Steve Alan**

I have probably had high blood pressure for a long time. This is the story of how I found out.

In hindsight, I can identify many symptoms of high blood pressure, but I either ignored them or thought they were related to other things.

The major symptom I had was headaches. Most days I would either wake up with a headache or develop one. Some of them were real "head splitters" ... occasionally I would have to lie down to stop the nausea. I remember often working in front of my computer and trying very hard not to move my head to avoid feeling sharp pains.

Since being diagnosed with high blood pressure and starting medication, I have not had one headache (around nine months now). My headaches were definitely due to my high blood pressure, but back then I thought they were due to stress, or poor posture due to sitting at a computer all day ... or any number of things.

THE DIAGNOSIS

I had been told for years by doctors that my blood pressure was high, but that it was probably due to the "white coat" effect. Turns out it wasn't. I went to a new doctor, and as she took my blood pressure, she had a very worried look on her face.

My systolic blood pressure reading was over 200.

She told me to go to hospital immediately and made me promise I would not ignore her warning. At the time I did think she was over-reacting, and I pictured myself sitting in the hospital emergency waiting room for a couple of hours, waiting for a doctor to see me, giving me a couple of pills to take, and heading home.

My High Blood Pressure

The actual story was very different.

I arrived at emergency and was given the standard "patient detail" form to fill out. Before I was 1/3 of the way through, a nurse turned up to take my blood pressure. She also got a worried look on her face, and took me straight to one of the emergency beds. This is in a hospital system famous for making people wait hours in emergency.

I had doctors all over me ... injecting things, taking blood, scanning me and god knows what else.

My clearest memory of that day was suddenly feeling very light headed.

The doctor later told me that I "liked" a drug (I think it was hydralazine) he injected into me. I say "liked" because only a doctor could think I "liked" it. In about 30 seconds I went from feeling what I then

considered normal, to being drenched in sweat, head spinning and throwing up my lunch. The nurses told me later that I was as white as a ghost.

I remember asking one of the emergency nurses if she thought I would be able to go home that night. She laughed.

I ended up spending 4 days in intensive care, and 6 days in the general hospital before they let me go home.

The quality of the care, the doctors and the nurses were all amazing. We have a free hospital system in Australia which sometimes gets a bad rap, but my experience was very positive.

MEDICATION

They never found a cause ... I just have high blood pressure. I take a fair bit of medication, and my blood pressure is now at normal levels.

My doctor told me to buy a blood pressure monitor and record my readings each day. Because I kept forgetting to take my readings, I wrote a software program to remind me. The software also charts the readings from my home monitor, and it is clear that my readings have been dropping over the last six months.

My readings are now around 110–120 over 70–80. Much better, but more importantly, I feel a lot better ... I had no idea that high blood pressure could make you feel so unwell.

If you also have high blood pressure I wish you well! If you have not seen a doctor about it, I highly recommend it ... don't leave it as late as I did, they can help you to feel a lot better!

Steve Alan is the author of a software program for Windows (free trial available), which reminds you to use your home blood pressure monitor, as well as recording and charting your readings. Email or print a report of your readings for your Doctor. For more information go to:

Using Blood Pressure Monitors To Maintain Your Health

By Mike Yeager

Many people today realize the importance of keeping their blood pressure under control. Blood pressure monitors are now available for home use. It's a piece of medical equipment that can provide both you and your health care provider with an accurate measure of how your blood pressure is responding to diet, exercise and medication. Many medical supplies outlets offer blood pressure monitors that are simple and easy to use.

For some people the thought of going to their Dr.'s office for a blood pressure reading is enough to send their pressure through the roof. That's one of the advantages of having your own blood pressure cuff right in their own home. They can use the blood pressure cuff at their own convenience and get a more accurate reading.

High blood pressure can be caused by many different factors such as weight, diet and heredity. If you have an elevated pressure then having your own blood pressure monitors available can be very important.

Mike Yeager
Publisher

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