

Exploring “Secondary Hypertension”

Do you know what causes hypertension? Sure I do, you would say! Most people get high blood pressure due to an increased salt intake, sedentary lifestyle, poor diet-high in cholesterol, obesity, and for some people genetic factors can contribute to hypertension. In mentioning these, you would be exactly right! These are the most common causes of “essential or primary hypertension.”

But what if you are someone who does not fit any of the categories mentioned above, yet still have high blood pressure? If this is you, keep reading.

Your increase in blood pressure could be due to what the medical community calls “secondary hypertension.” The following are some causes of Secondary hypertension.

- Oral contraceptives often raise the blood pressure in women.
- Long term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (aspirin, ibuprofen) and many antidepressants can induce hypertension.
- Chronic alcohol intake and alcohol abuse can also raise blood pressure.
- Kidney disease: high blood pressure is a frequent finding in both acute and chronic renal disease.
- Pheochromocytoma : this cause of hypertension is due to a tumor which is located in the adrenal glands (glands that sit above the kidneys). The tumor if present, it most often secretes excess of adrenalin, which leads to high blood pressure.
- Primary hyperaldosteronism : your body may produce an increase in the hormone aldosterone which is responsible for raising your blood pressure.
- Cushing's syndrome : this is a hormonal disorder that causes an increase of cortisol in the blood, which leads to high blood pressure.
- Other endocrine disorders : Hypertension may be caused by an increase or decrease in levels of thyroid or parathyroid levels in your body.
- Sleep apnea syndrome: this condition causes disordered breathing during sleep, and has been shown to be a risk factor for hypertension.
- Coarctation of the aorta: This is a condition where there is a narrowing in the largest artery in the body; the aorta. This narrowing causes an increase in blood pressure. Coarctation of the aorta is a congenital defect, and is often diagnosed in children presenting with high blood pressure.

So what does this mean for you?

Here at Heart and Health, we look at the patient as a “whole.” This includes a full assessment of past medical history, current medical conditions, laboratory results and imaging studies. If you fit into the above causes of “secondary hypertension,” we will address these medical concerns, provide solutions, and help control your hypertension. Our goal is to make sure you are living optimally, and living healthy!

Reference: UpToDate.com

http://www.uptodate.com/contents/overview-of-hypertension-in-adults?source=search_result&selectedTitle=2%7E38