

FEATURES

High Blood Pressure: The Silent Killer

By Arnetta Hauser, RN

Since last month was Black History Month, I felt that a look at the disease which is the number one health problem for Black Americans would be appropriate. That health problem, more commonly referred to as "high blood pressure"; strikes Blacks -especially men- at a rate of 2:1 as compared to Whites.

Recently, I was asked to explain just what a blood pressure really measures. That's when it dawned on me that most folk-especially the traditional college age group-probably have the same question. Well, blood pressure, according to numerous publications, measures the amount of force the blood exerts against the walls of the arteries, as it is being pumped to all parts of the body. Naturally, a person's blood pressure may vary throughout a 24 hour period. There are many factors which contribute to this. If a person is excited, certain hormones and chemicals are released by the body, causing blood vessels to constrict (narrow). The narrower the arteries, the harder the heart has to work to move the same amount of

blood therefore, the higher the blood pressure. Many of us have experienced elevations in our blood pressure when visiting the doctor or dentist. During periods of rest and relaxation, the blood vessels are wider, which will mean a lower blood pressure.

If a blood pressure continues to be high, it causes the heart to be overworked and it strains the blood vessels and can make them diseased. Although in 90% of the cases, the causes of hypertension is unknown, doctors do view the following as factors which may increase a person's risk of developing hypertension:

1. Heredity
2. High levels of cholesterol (fat) or sodium(salt) in the diet.
3. A lifestyle of continued stress and frustration.

The borderline figures have changed over the last few decades, but for the most part a reading of 120/80 is within the "normal" range for a healthy adult. Most health care providers agree though that anything below 140 to 150/90 is considered within normal limits. Anything greater than that would be considered hypertension.

Why is all of this impor-

tant you ask? Well, hypertension is the greatest single risk factor a person may have in developing heart disease. Hypertension can lead to heart attack, the dreaded stroke, and kidney disease.

Hypertension is not called "the silent killer" for nothing. Many people with high blood pressure are not aware that they have it. Generally, in the early stages, no symptoms are present. It does not make a person feel bad, or dizzy, lightheaded or weak, it doesn't cause a headache or make spots before the eyes. Generally those symptoms occur after hypertension has been well established. That is the reason a simple periodic blood pressure check is so important. Once daily for a total of four consecutive borderline or high readings, the individual is either referred to his private physician or the university physician.

Most cases of hypertension can be controlled by one or a combination of the following:

Weight reduction-which relieves the workload on the heart.

Special diet -includes avoiding those culprits sodium and cholesterol.

Relaxation-which includes stress reduction and relaxation techniques.

Exercise-which works hand in hand with weight reduction

Medication-special drugs for high blood pressure help to lower it although there is a lot of controversy surrounding it, health care providers believe that hypertension is aggravated by cigarette smoking (especially heavy smoking).

Hypertension does not have to be a "silent killer" of Black Americans. Increased awareness is the key to resolving this problem. This is not an "old folk's" disease. According to the American Heart Association, people over 20 years old have been shown to have hypertension.

The University health center operates 24 hours per day seven days per week for your convenience. Have your blood pressure checked soon.

Carpenter Presents Senior Recital

By Marcus Mathis

Carlton Carpenter recently gave his Senior Recital on February 18th at WSSU's Anderson Center. Carpenter, a Winston-Salem native performed a repertoire consisting of German and Italian works from George Fredrick Handel's "Elijah", an

oratorio entitled "Mosiah", two spirituals, and three contemporary music pieces: "Can I", by David Pearston, "I Want Your Love", by Pieces of a Dream, and "Lonely Girl", by Ce Ce Rogers.

Over the years, Carpenter has had plenty of practice and experience. While studying music here at WSSU, his instructors have been Dr. Faustina Holman, Dr. Permillia Dunston, and Ms. D'Walla Simmons. He has also been a

member of the jazz ensemble, gospel choir, University Singers and Choir. What interested Carpenter in music? "Actually, it began as a practical joke when I was in the ninth grade at Atkins High School. My Friends and I used to sing to each other over the phone and they said, you sound pretty good, so I entered a talent show at high school; I guess I did it because they dared me. When I discovered I stimulated audiences that is when I began to pursue it as a

career." Carpenter took a 13-week program at the North Carolina School of the Arts, instructed by Martha Teachey as well as singing with the East Forsyth Madrigals. Carpenter likes the attention and says, "You can't get anywhere in life without being noticed, but you have to work to be the best."

Carpenter's long-term goal is to record an album preferably produced by L. A. and Babyface or Teddy Riley.