

HEALTHY NORTH DAKOTA



HIGHLIGHTS

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High blood pressure: the silent killer

Elevated blood pressure often is ignored and under treated because it causes few symptoms. About one in four North Dakotans (24%) have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, also called hypertension. Hypertension damages blood vessels throughout the body, increasing the risk for many common chronic diseases including heart attack, strokes, heart failure, kidney failure, and even blindness.

Lowering the blood pressure to normal levels greatly reduces the risk. Medications are often necessary to control blood pressure, but reducing body weight to normal, increasing physical activity and reducing salt intake are the first steps in blood pressure control. A blood pressure of 140/90 or higher is abnormal; an optimum blood pressure is less than 120/80.

Hypertension rises with age

- Fifty-three percent of respondents age 65 and older reported being diagnosed with hypertension. (Figure 1) (North Dakota, 2003)
- Hypertension afflicts men (24%) and women (25%) equally. (North Dakota, 2003)
- Hypertension was common among respondents who reported ever having a heart attack (65%), heart disease or angina (58%), or a stroke (56%). (Figure 2) (North Dakota, 2003)
- Respondents who reported other risk factors for cardiovascular disease (obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol) also frequently reported hypertension. (Figure 2) (North Dakota, 2003)

Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents Ever Told by a Doctor That They Had Hypertension, by Age North Dakota, 2003

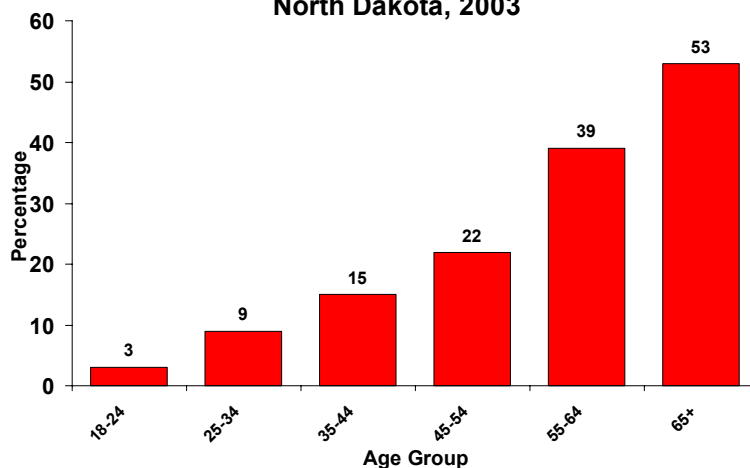
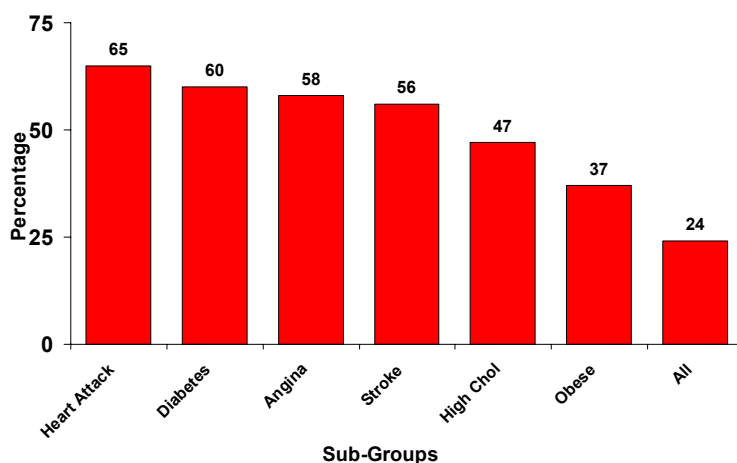


Figure 2: Prevalence of Hypertension Among Sub-Groups, North Dakota, 2003



Goal of Healthy People 2010: Control Blood Pressure

Many individuals with high blood pressure do not even know they have the condition. Among those who do know, only about 18 percent have their blood pressure under control. A Healthy People 2010 goal is to get hypertension under control for 50 percent of people who have the condition.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

To decrease the risk of complications due to hypertension:

- Stay physically active.
- Maintain a normal body weight.
- Limit salt (sodium) intake.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Maintain normal blood sugar and normal blood cholesterol.
- Know your blood pressure number.
- See a health-care provider regularly and keep your blood pressure under control.
- Follow a low-fat diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Take blood pressure medications as prescribed.

“**Healthy North Dakota - Highlights**” is prepared by the Department of Community Medicine, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences for the North Dakota Department of Health.

To learn more about hypertension and other behavioral health risks in NORTH DAKOTA, contact the North Dakota Department of Health, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept 301, Bismarck, ND 58505; 701.323.2372; or visit www.ndhealth.gov.



TECHNICAL NOTE

Data presented in this “**Healthy North Dakota - Highlights**” come from the North Dakota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for year 2003. Every year since 1984, a random sample of adult (age 18 and older) North Dakotans has been interviewed about a wide variety of behavioral risks that are important to staying healthy. Full details of the survey method used to secure these data can be seen at www.cdc.gov/brfss. Whenever race-specific estimates for North Dakota American Indians are presented, a seven-year aggregate BRFSS dataset (1996-2002) has been used; 438 respondents during this time period identified themselves as American Indian, and 14,127 as whites.

In 2003, there were 3,026 respondents to the North Dakota BRFSS. The responses described in this issue concern: Hypertension: respondent who have been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that they have high blood pressure.

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