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Oklahoma HMO educates on importance of maintaining healthy blood pressure

Over 35 percent of adults in Oklahoma have high blood pressure

OKLAHOMA – In 2016, over 35 percent of adults who live in Oklahoma reported they were told by a health professional that they have high blood pressure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This month, GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization (HMO), is working to remind Oklahomans the importance of maintaining a healthy blood pressure to lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney damage and vision loss.

“High blood pressure occurs when the force of blood through our arteries is too high,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “Because high blood pressure can be completely asymptomatic and leads to a multitude of cardiovascular conditions, it is important to schedule an annual exam with your primary care physician to screen for this condition.”

This month, GlobalHealth is offering Oklahomans the following tips to help control and maintain a healthy blood pressure:

Eat a well-balanced, low-sodium diet. A diet rich with foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and fish, and nuts and legumes can help manage your blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Limit saturated fats, trans fats, sodium, red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages in your diet, as these items can exponentially increase your blood pressure.

Limit alcohol. Limiting alcohol consumption can help prevent high blood pressure. Men should limit alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks per day and women should have no more than one drink per day, according to the AHA. A drink is one beer, a glass of wine or a cocktail with 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits or 1 ounce of 100-proof spirits.

Enjoy regular physical activity. Physical activity not only helps control high blood pressure, but it also helps you manage your weight, strengthen your heart and lower your stress level. A healthy weight, a strong heart and general emotional health are all good for your blood pressure.

The key is consistency. The initial goal for anyone starting a workout routine is to get 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity three to four times per week, according to the AHA.

Maintain a healthy weight. People with a body mass index (BMI), a numerical value of weight in relation to height, of 26 or higher are considered overweight and those with a BMI of 30 or higher are considered obese, according to the AHA. Being overweight and/or obese puts you at greater risk of developing health problems. A little weight loss can bring a lot of health gains and reduce the strain on your heart. Moving often and eating well can help you maintain a healthy weight and contribute to a healthy blood pressure.

“Not only do we aim to increase awareness of high blood pressure, but we also want to encourage Oklahomans to take steps for disease management and healthy living,” Williams said. “We are a health plan that focuses on preventive care and want to encourage Oklahomans this month to schedule a routine appointment with their primary care physician, especially if they have a family history of high blood pressure or have been diagnosed with high blood pressure.”

About GlobalHealth

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering more than 44,000 individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with each member, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state and education employees, federal employees, municipal employees, Medicare Advantage members and private employers. GlobalHealth employs more than 250 associates throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit www.globalhealth.com.

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