Apathy is the Silent Killer as Nearly 40% of UK Adults Ignore Need to Check Blood Pressure Which Could Prevent 136,000 Related Cardiovascular Diseases

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Despite being one of the biggest single (and preventable) causes of death in the UK as it has no obvious symptoms, only 8% of the UK population consider heart disease and stroke to be their biggest health fear – with many showing a lack of concern towards reducing their risk. That's according to a NEW survey by national charity, Blood Pressure UK to mark Know Your Numbers! Week (6-12 September).

Whilst measuring your blood pressure (i.e. using a home blood pressure monitor, at a pharmacy or with a practice nurse) is the most important first step any adult can take to help reduce their chances of having a stroke, heart attack or heart failure – astonishingly, over a third (37%) of respondents state their blood pressure is not of concern. A further third (39%) of people do not understand why they should know their blood pressure numbers (nor have they checked their blood pressure since March 2020) – despite two-thirds (64%) being aware of the associated (and deadly) health dangers.

With nearly 6 million people in the UK unaware of their blood pressure numbers, yet live daily with undiagnosed high blood pressure, Blood Pressure UK is urging all adults (of all ages) to check their blood pressure as routine and in tandem, reduce their salt intake. The more people tested, to enable them to control their high blood pressure, the more premature deaths will be prevented. This coincides with Public Health England's (2021) report which revealed there were over 5,000 more CVD and stroke deaths than expected last year, with half of these attributable to disruptions to normal healthcare services.

Whilst the evidence is clear regarding those more likely to be seriously affected by a Covid-19 infection (i.e. people who are older, have existing long-term medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or uncontrolled blood sugar, kidney disease or are overweight), a worrying two thirds (62%) of the population claim the pandemic has not made them want to improve their general health – with a quarter (26%) saying they simply have 'other priorities to focus on.'

From the survey findings, cancer is ranked the most feared disease (20%), followed by Covid-19 (17%) and mental health (15%). Despite this, one-fifth of the population has absolutely no health fears.

Of those (37%) who have made positive changes to their health during the pandemic, around half (56%) have now started eating more healthily (including fresh fruit and vegetables), 54% became more active and 41% are eating less salty, sugary and fatty foods. Research shows that eating too much salt is a major cause of high blood pressure, particularly the rise in blood pressure with age. As a nation, if we cut one gram of salt from our average daily salt intake, this would cause a fall in blood pressure and there would be approximately 6,000 fewer deaths from strokes and heart attacks each year in the UK.

Phil Pyatt, CEO of Blood Pressure UK comments:
"We must remind everyone that high blood pressure does not show any clear symptoms, hence the 'silent killer' reputation. That's why it's so important to take control of your health by

Knowing Your Numbers as well as benefitting from simple improvements in diet and lifestyle such as eating less salt, more fruit and vegetables and doing more exercise."

Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of Blood Pressure UK says:
"Half of all strokes and heart disease are due to high blood pressure. It is therefore vital that high blood pressure is detected early and treated. Everyone needs to take control of their health by checking their blood pressure either at home, at a pharmacy or with their practice nurse. This could save your life."

Hemini Bharadia, Know Your Numbers! Week Marketing Manager explains:
"With nearly 6 million people in the UK unaware of their blood pressure numbers and our survey revealing that one in three (37%) respondents say their blood pressure is not of concern, we encourage the public to take control of their health and get their blood pressure checked. Since high blood pressure is largely symptomless, home monitoring can really help people to feel more in control of their condition. Whilst there is a wide range of home blood pressure monitors available, remember to choose one with an upper cuff which is the right size for your arm and make sure it's UK approved."

To find out more visit: bloodpressureuk.org

Regional and city-specific stats from the survey are available for regional media

Contact: david@rock-pr.com M: 07773 225516 for more info

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About Blood Pressure UK
Blood Pressure UK is the UK's leading blood pressure charity working to lower the nation's blood pressure to prevent disability and death from stroke and heart disease.

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