

MEDIA RELEASE

8 April 2019

Embargoed until 00:01 10 April 2019

Know your blood pressure: A simple test could save your life

With around 67,000 deaths in England associated with high blood pressure each year, Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and the British Heart Foundation are urging adults, living in Hull and East Riding, to know their blood pressure by getting a free test at participating pharmacies.

Almost five million people in the UK have high blood pressure and don't know it, in the Hull and East Riding, that's over 60,000 people. High blood pressure rarely has any symptoms, which is why it's called the 'silent killer'. The only way for a person to know whether they have the condition, is to get their blood pressure measured.

This new scheme 'Know your blood pressure', launching 10 April 2019, offers local residents a free blood pressure test at participating pharmacies throughout Hull and East Riding. If a person records a high blood pressure reading, they will be encouraged to monitor their blood pressure over a seven-day period with the loan of a monitor and log book. A follow-up appointment with their pharmacist will determine whether to refer to them to their doctor for treatment, and support in adopting healthy lifestyle changes.

Dr Anne Jeffreys, local GP and East Riding of Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group clinical chairperson said:

"High blood pressure is the third biggest risk factor for premature death and disability in England. This is why it's so important people know their blood pressure. In particular, we want to see those adults who lead busy lives, don't regularly visit their GP and tend to self-care. This is a great initiative, offering a quick and easy opportunity for people to have a free test.

"Knowing whether they have high blood pressure allows people to make small healthy lifestyle changes to reduce it, keep it at a normal level, lowering their risk of stroke, heart attack or heart failure, and ultimately improving their long-term health.

"If people want more information or to find out where their nearest participating pharmacy is, visit knowyourbloodpressure.co.uk"

Dr James Crick, Consultant in Public Health Medicine and Associate Medical Director for NHS Hull CCG, said:

“High blood pressure often goes unseen as people generally do not have any symptoms, but the potential consequences of not managing it could be huge for individuals and families. I really welcome the blood pressure testing initiative being made available in 20 community pharmacies in Hull. Community pharmacies are accessible, and open at weekends and longer hours to suit busy lives, and people don’t need to make an appointment for a test.

“There are also a number of changes that people can make to lower their blood pressure if they are concerned like increasing physical activity, reducing salt in their diet, reducing the amount of alcohol they drink and stopping smoking; increasing physical activity does not mean running a marathon, beginning small, like taking the stairs instead of the lift is a good start. These are sensible things to do whether your blood pressure is high or not, but they are especially important for those with high blood pressure.”

Heather McLean, Health Service Engagement Lead at the British Heart Foundation said:

“Everybody should take the opportunity to know their blood pressure. Serious health conditions such as heart attack, stroke and heart failure can all be made more likely by having blood pressure that is too high, so we want people to know their numbers like they know their PIN! Having the check isn’t scary or time-consuming – and you never know – it could save your life!

“We are delighted to be supporting this initiative that gives people across Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire the chance to become more informed about their health and how to lower their risk of heart and circulatory diseases. Projects like this are a crucial part of our mission to beat heartbreak forever.”

ENDS

Notes to Editor

Dr Anne Jeffreys will be available to carry out media interviews Tuesday 9 and Wednesday 10 April, mornings only. Please contact Lucy Bannister, 01482 672156, email lucy.bannister1@nhs.net to arrange.

References

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-combating-high-blood-pressure/health-matters-combating-high-blood-pressure>

<http://www.bloodpressureuk.org/mediacentre/Factsandfigures>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/risk-factors/high-blood-pressure>

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648190/cardiovascular_disease_prevention_action_plan_2017_to_2018.pdf

About the BHF

One in four of us in the UK and one in three globally die from heart and circulatory diseases. That's why the British Heart Foundation funds world-leading research into their causes, prevention, treatment and cure. Advances from our research have saved and improved millions of lives, but heart diseases, stroke, vascular dementia and their risk factors such as diabetes still cause heartbreak on every street. With the public's support, our funding will drive the new discoveries to end that heartbreak. Find out more at bhf.org.uk.