Unmasking Hidden Hypertension

High blood pressure, once thought to be one entity, is now believed to have three variations. Masked hypertension, the newest type, was identified only in the last decade. We know less about it than about the other two, white-coat hypertension and sustained hypertension (high blood pressure that happens all the time). Studies have found that masked hypertension is present in about 10 percent of the population. It's more common in men and in people with type 2 diabetes.

The havor wreaked on our bodies by masked high blood pressure is somewhere between that of the white-coat and sustained versions. Those effects include a thickening of the heart muscle, increased plaque in the lining of the carotid arteries, reduced blood flow in selected arteries, and a loss of aortic elasticity. Beyond that lie the usual complications of untreated hypertension, such as stroke and kidney disease.

It is beginning to appear that taking a random blood pressure test in the office may be analogous to a snapshot—a recording of a measurement made at one instant that provides no reliable information about blood pressure over the course of time. Screening the entire population for masked hypertension with out-of-office tests like ambulatory and home monitoring is unlikely to be cost effective. But a meta-analysis from the Columbia University School of Public Health concluded that ambulatory or home monitoring may be cost effective for confirming a suspicion of masked hypertension. Measurements taken before and immediately after a 30-second breath-holding test showed rises in blood pressure in 22 of 28 subjects with masked hypertension, as verified with ambulatory monitoring. When the test showed no rise in blood pressure with breath holding, ambulatory monitoring agreed with that finding every time. The test would appear to be useful in ruling out masked hypertension but requires confirmation by larger studies before it can be used as a guide to treatment.

If you think you may be at risk for masked hypertension consider adding <u>Bio-CardioSirt BP</u> to your supplement schedule. Please contact us for more information and with any questions.

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