

# WEEK 2 HYPERTENSION (STROKE)



Dear Colleagues,

## **Welcome to Week 2 of our Weekly Health Tips series!**

This week, we'll be delving into the critical topic of Hypertension and Stroke. As we continue our journey to better health, we'll explore important insights, practical advice, and resources to help you understand and manage these conditions effectively. Join us as we empower you with knowledge and strategies to reduce the risk of stroke.



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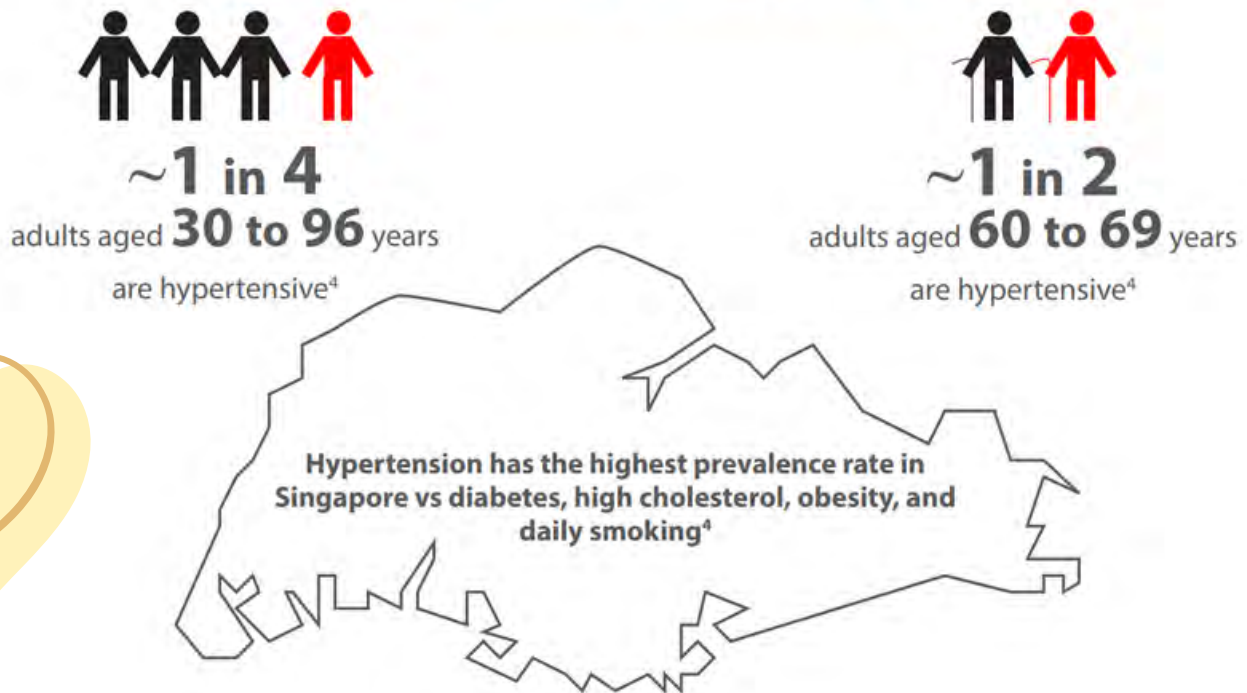


## Week 2 - Hypertension (Stroke)

### What is Hypertension?

Hypertension, commonly known as high blood pressure, is a medical condition characterized by elevated pressure in the arteries. It is often asymptomatic but can significantly increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other health complications if left untreated.

#### Hypertension: A growing concern in Singapore<sup>4</sup>

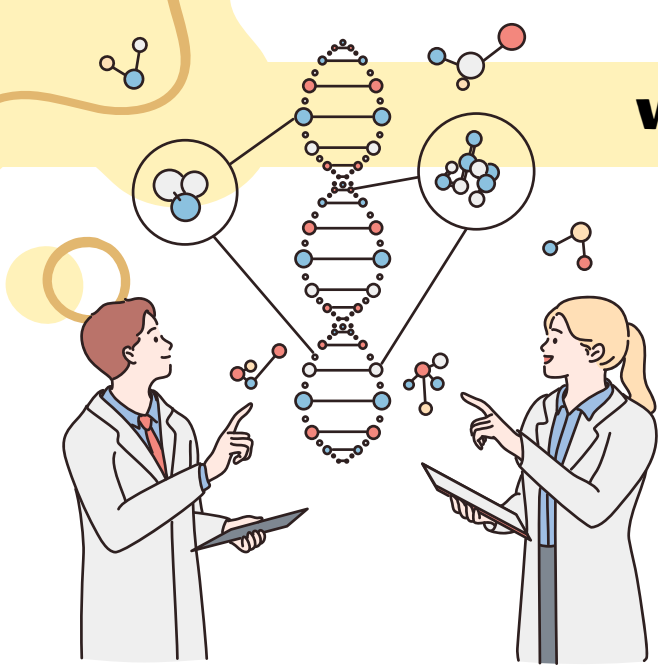


### Who Can Be Diagnosed with Hypertension?

People of any age, gender, or race can develop hypertension. Although it is more prevalent in older persons, hypertension can occur at any age due to lifestyle factors like smoking, obesity, poor diet, and inactivity.

### Why is Preventing Hypertension Important?

**Preventing hypertension** is crucial for reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack and stroke, as well as other health complications like kidney disease and vision loss. Individuals can safeguard their overall health and well-being by keeping their blood pressure levels within reasonable limits.



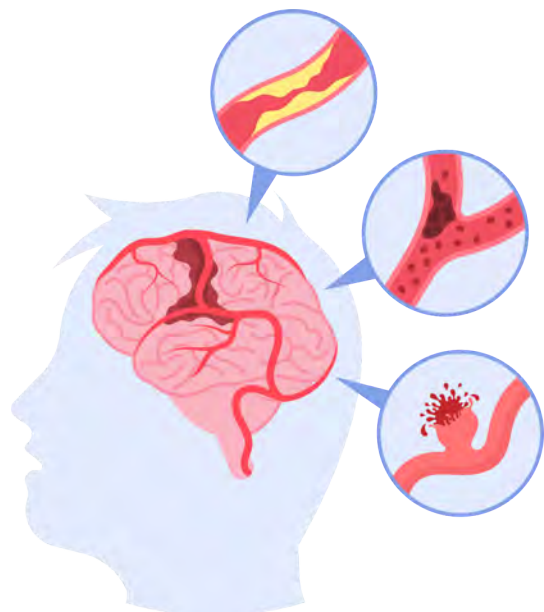
### What Causes Hypertension?

Hypertension can be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. Risk factors include obesity, sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol consumption, high salt intake, stress, smoking, and certain underlying health conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease.



### How is Hypertension and Stroke Related?

Hypertension is a significant risk factor for stroke. Elevated blood pressure can harm blood arteries in the brain, increasing the risk of blood clots or ruptures, which can lead to a stroke. Controlling blood pressure is critical for stroke prevention.



## Week 2 - Hypertension (Stroke)

### SIGNS OF HYPERTENSION AND STROKE

#### Hypertension

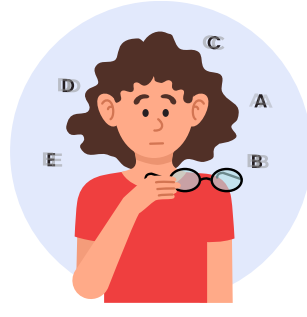
Hypertension often presents without noticeable symptoms.



Headaches



Dizziness



Blurred Vision



Chest Pain



Difficulty Breathing



Nosebleeds



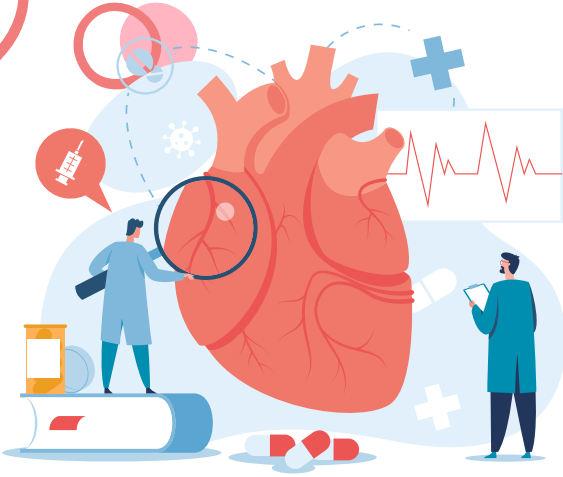
Irregular Heartbeat

#### Stroke

The acronym **B.E.F.A.S.T.** can help you remember the signs of a stroke.

<b>B</b>	<b>Balance</b>	Sudden loss of balance or coordination.
<b>E</b>	<b>Eyes</b>	Sudden blurred, double, or loss of vision.
<b>F</b>	<b>Face Drooping</b>	Drooping or numbness of the face.
<b>A</b>	<b>Arm</b>	Weakness or numbness of arms or legs on one side.
<b>S</b>	<b>Speech</b>	Slurred speech, unable to speak or difficult to understand.
<b>T</b>	<b>Time</b>	If you experience ANY, call emergency immediately.

### How Does Hypertension Affect Us?

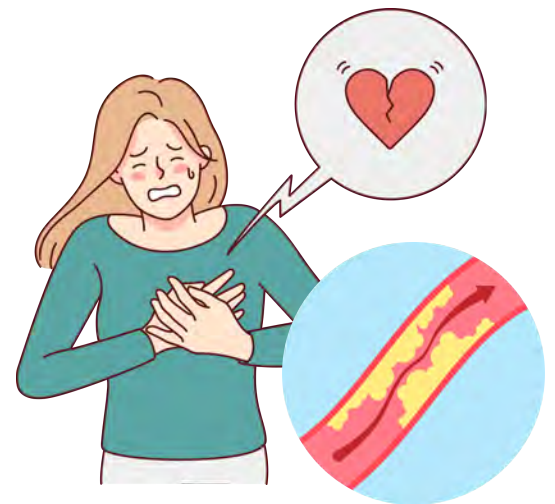


#### Cardiovascular Health

Hypertension puts a strain on the heart and blood vessels, increasing the risk of various cardiovascular conditions. Over time, untreated hypertension can lead to heart disease, including coronary artery disease, heart attack (myocardial infarction), heart failure, and irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias).

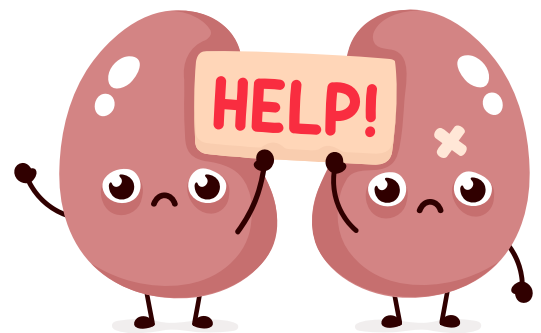
#### Stroke Risk

Hypertension is a leading risk factor for stroke. Elevated blood pressure can damage blood vessels in the brain, increasing the risk of blood clots or ruptures that can lead to a stroke. Both ischemic strokes (caused by blocked blood vessels) and haemorrhagic strokes (caused by bleeding in the brain) are associated with hypertension.



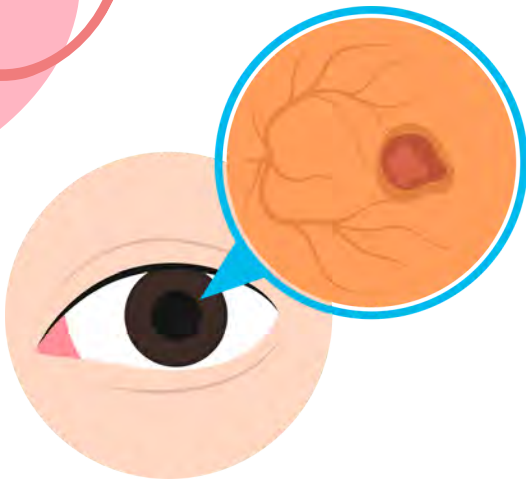
#### Kidney Damage

High blood pressure can damage the kidneys and impair their ability to filter waste products from the blood. This can lead to chronic kidney disease (CKD), kidney failure, and an increased risk of requiring dialysis or kidney transplantation.



## Week 2 - Hypertension (Stroke)

### How Does Hypertension Affect Us?

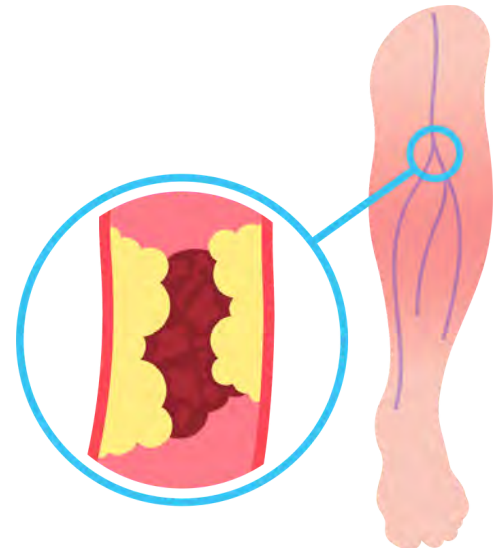


#### Eye Health

Hypertension can cause damage to the blood vessels in the eyes, leading to retinopathy, a condition characterized by damage to the retina. Retinopathy can result in vision problems, including blurred vision, vision loss, and in severe cases, blindness.

#### Peripheral Artery Disease

Hypertension can contribute to the narrowing and hardening of the arteries in the limbs, reducing blood flow to the legs and arms. This condition, known as peripheral artery disease (PAD), can cause leg pain, cramping, numbness, and impaired wound healing.



#### Aneurysms

Chronic high blood pressure can weaken the walls of blood vessels, increasing the risk of developing aneurysms. An aneurysm is a bulge or ballooning in a blood vessel wall, which can rupture and cause life-threatening bleeding if left untreated.



Saccular Aneurysm



Fusiform Aneurysm



Ruptured Aneurysm



### How Does Hypertension Affect Us?

#### Cognitive Decline

Some research suggests that hypertension may be associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Elevated blood pressure can damage small blood vessels in the brain, leading to reduced blood flow and potential cognitive impairment.

#### Overall Health and Quality of Life

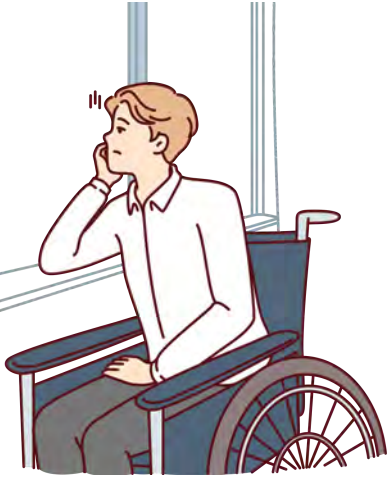
Hypertension is a significant risk factor for overall morbidity and mortality. It can contribute to a reduced quality of life, increased healthcare costs, and greater dependence on medical interventions such as medications, surgeries, and hospitalizations.



### How Does Stroke Affect Us?

#### Physical Impairments

Depending on the location and severity of the stroke, individuals may experience physical impairments such as weakness or paralysis on one side of the body (hemiparesis or hemiplegia), difficulty with balance and coordination, and changes in sensation. These impairments can impact mobility and daily activities, making it challenging to perform tasks independently.



#### Communication Difficulties

Stroke can affect communication abilities, leading to difficulties with speech and language (aphasia). Some individuals may struggle to find the right words, understand spoken or written language, or express themselves clearly. Aphasia can significantly impact social interactions, work, and overall quality of life.



#### Cognitive Changes

Stroke can cause cognitive impairments, including difficulties with memory, attention, concentration, and problem-solving. Some individuals may experience changes in personality, emotional regulation, and executive function, affecting their ability to manage daily tasks and make decisions independently.



#### Emotional and Psychological Effects

Stroke survivors may experience a range of emotional and psychological challenges, including depression, anxiety, frustration, grief, and loss. Coping with physical disabilities, changes in independence, and adjusting to life after stroke can contribute to emotional distress and impact mental well-being.

### How Does Stroke Affect Us?



#### Functional Limitations

Stroke can result in functional limitations that affect various aspects of daily living, such as self-care activities (e.g., bathing, dressing, toileting), household chores, and participation in social and recreational activities. Rehabilitation and adaptive strategies may be necessary to regain independence and improve functional abilities.



#### Social and Occupational Impact

Stroke can affect communication abilities, leading to difficulties with speech and language (aphasia). Some individuals may struggle to find the right words, understand spoken or written language, or express themselves clearly. Aphasia can significantly impact social interactions, work, and overall quality of life.

#### Caregiver Strain

Stroke can also affect family members and caregivers who provide support and assistance to stroke survivors. Caregivers may experience physical, emotional, and financial strain as they navigate caregiving responsibilities, coordinate healthcare services, and manage the challenges of caregiving.

### Tips on How We Can Prevent Hypertension



#### Keep a Healthy Weight

To reduce the risk of hypertension due to excess weight, maintain a healthy weight through a balanced diet and regular exercise.



#### Eat a Balanced Diet

Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Limit intake of saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars to reduce cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure.



#### Reduce Sodium Intake

Limit high-sodium processed foods, choose fresh options with minimal salt, and aim for less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium daily to manage blood pressure.



#### Exercise Regularly

To improve health, engage in aerobic exercise like walking, jogging, swimming, or cycling for 150 minutes weekly. It lowers blood pressure, boosts cardiovascular fitness, and helps maintain a healthy weight.



#### Quit Smoking

Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke can damage blood vessels and raise blood pressure.

### Tips on How We Can Prevent Hypertension



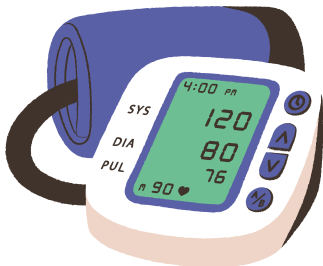
#### Limit Alcohol Consumption

Limit alcohol intake to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men to avoid raising blood pressure levels.



#### Manage Stress

To reduce stress and high blood pressure, practice deep breathing, meditation, yoga, tai chi, progressive muscle relaxation, or spend time in nature.



#### Monitor Blood Pressure

Knowing your numbers and tracking changes over time can help identify hypertension early and guide treatment decisions.



#### Lifestyle Modification

Adopting healthy lifestyle habits overall can help prevent hypertension and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

#### Follow Medication Recommendations

If prescribed hypertension medication, follow your healthcare provider's instructions. Types of medications include diuretics, beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, or ARBs. Regularly follow up with your provider to monitor effectiveness and adjust treatment.

# Week 2 - Hypertension (Stroke)

## Test for Hypertension at Home

While there are various blood pressure monitors available for home use, it is essential to choose a reliable device and follow proper techniques for accurate readings.

### How to Take Blood Pressure at Home

**If your blood pressure is high at the doctor's office, you may want to check your blood pressure at home.**

You can also check your blood pressure before a doctor's appointment or after starting a new medication for blood pressure.



**1** Check **in the morning and in the evening for one week** before visiting your healthcare professional.

**2** Take 3 readings in a single sitting. You can ignore reading #1, and record reading #2 and #3.

**3** Sit in a chair with your back supported, legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor. A kitchen chair works well.

**4** Put the blood pressure cuff on your bare arm. The cuff should be 2 finger widths above the bend in your arm.

**5** Use a pillow or table top to raise your arm to the level of the centre of your chest.

**6** When comfortable, rest for 5 minutes (no speaking and phone ringer off). Try reading a book or magazine. Have a clock nearby to help you measure 5 min.

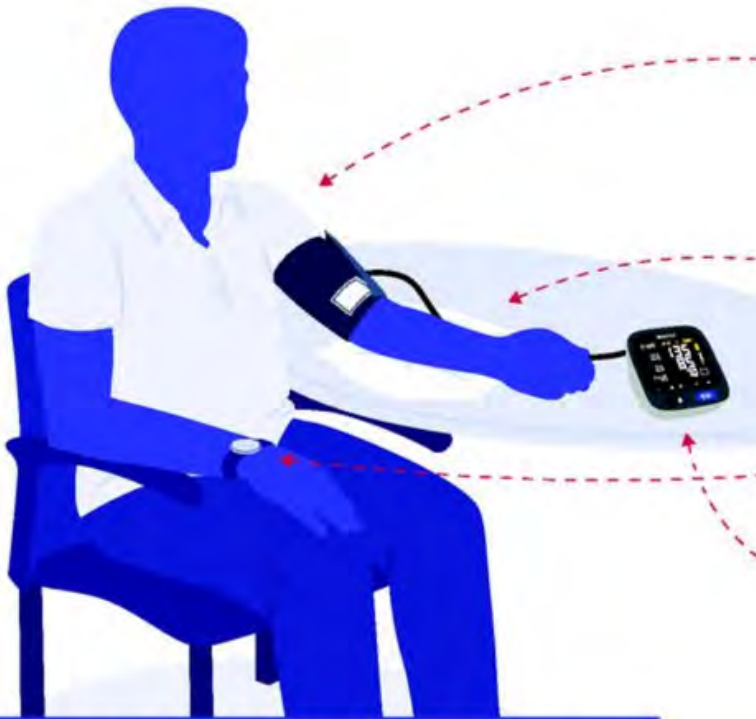
**7** After 5 minutes have passed, start the blood pressure device.



**8** Face the device away from you. Watching the numbers can make your blood pressure go up.

**9** 1 minute after the first reading is finished, start the machine for reading #2. Remember, you can ignore reading #1.

**10** Write down reading #2. 1 minute later, start the machine again. Write down reading #3, and you're finished.

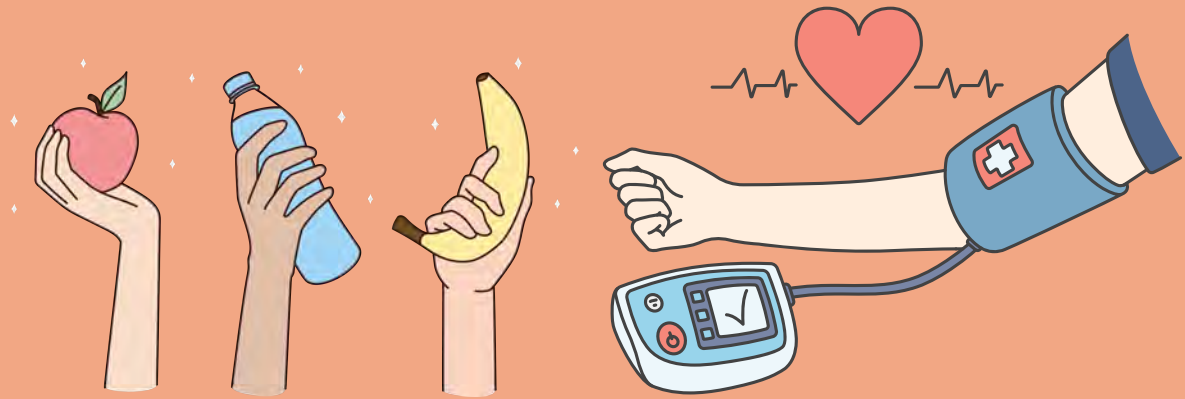


**!** Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about what BP goal would be best for you.

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Monitor blood pressure regularly at the same time each day, keep a record of readings with date and time, and share with healthcare provider for hypertension management.





**“YOUR PANTRY IS YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS AND THINGS LIKE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND CHOLESTEROL.”**

**- JOE BASTIANICH**



**End of Sharing. Thank you for reading.**

We trust that you have found these health tips enjoyable. We hope you have gained valuable insights and will prioritise your health and well-being. Stay tuned for next week's topic focusing on heart health in week 3!

