

# Less salt please

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World Action on Salt & Health has designated March 11-17, 2013 as World Salt Awareness Week. This important week is observed to highlight the importance of reducing salt intake in all populations throughout the world. Hypertension Committee of National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh (NHFB) is also observing World Salt Awareness Week 2013. The theme of this year is *Less Salt Please*.

Although salt is necessary for normal healthy life, excess salt intake is bad for one's health. There is considerable scientific evidence that high salt or sodium intake causes high blood pressure and related problems like heart attack, stroke and kidney disease and in turns many unnecessary death and disability in individuals without a prior history of heart diseases. We should take proper awareness programmes and measures to change our dietary habit to live a low-sodium lifestyle and to demand that lower sodium products be made available.

Sodium can be absorbed from dietary intake as table salt, cooking salt and drinking water high in sodium. Normal requirement of salt for adult is less than 1 gram per day and children require even



less. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that adults limit their daily salt intake to less than 5 grams. Reducing our average daily salt intake by just 1 gram can prevent thousands of death from stroke every year. Adverse effect of high salt intake is not just limited to stroke and cardiovascular disease, high salt intake is known to cause stomach cancer, osteoporosis and is thought to play a major part in the worldwide obesity epidemic.

Sadly, most people in Bangladesh consume excessive salt in their diet. A dietary sodium intake study conducted by the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute in Dhaka has found that the population tested was consuming 10.5 grams of salt daily more than twice that recommended by WHO.

Salt intake in the population is increasing due to increase in consumption of salt rich western diet such as fast food and soft drinks. A meta

analysis study done by the Military Institute of Science and Technology Bangladesh found that in the coastal regions of Bangladesh sodium intake from drinking water can contribute significantly to the mass balance of daily sodium intake.

Time has come to take action against excess salt intake. We can do the following to limit our salt intake:

- Cook and eat our meals at home rather than eat ready-made meals such as take-away and processed food high in sodium.
- Get out of the habit of adding salt to the table to our food.
- Use herbs, spices, chili, pepper and lemon to add flavor while cooking instead of adding salt while preparing our food.
- We can eat healthy snacks such as fruits or unsalted nuts rather than packaged foods like chips or salted nuts.
- We can also limit our intake of soft drinks known to contain sodium and/or water high in sodium.
- Do not be fooled- sea salt and rock salt are just as bad for you as table salt.

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## LIFE EXPECTANCY

### Over 50? Check the list to predict your chance to live more 10 yrs

STAR HEALTH DESK

A simple checklist could help doctors estimate whether an older patient will be alive 10 years from now, according to a new study reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Although not a crystal ball, researchers say it might help doctors and patients make better decisions on health care.

The researchers created the checklist based on data from a national study of nearly 20,000 US adults older than 50. They found that 12 factors including age, sex, weight, smoking and whether a person has diabetes, lung disease, heart disease or physical limitations such as difficulty walking a few blocks or moving large objects, can give an idea of an older adult's risk of dying within 10 years.

Doctors can get that information using yes-or-no questions, and then assign points for each answer. People with a total score of one have, on average, a 5% chance of dying in the next 10 years. A score of five translates to a 23% chance of dying within a decade, while a score of 10 corresponds to a 70% risk.

But, none of that is set in stone. This provides us with evidence-based numbers to help take better decisions. However, those decisions on whether to screen for or treat a disease should not be based solely on a number.

## HEALTH TIPS



### Make TV time exercise time

You do not have to give up television watching just to lead a more active lifestyle. The American Council on Exercise suggests these ways to exercise while you are watching TV:

- Do not use your remote. Instead, get up off the couch to change the channel.
- During commercial breaks, walk up and down the stairs, or walk around the room.
- Work out using a resistance band.
- Invest in a treadmill, so you can work out while you watch.
- Iron your clothes while watching.
- Instead of lounging on the couch, sit on a stability ball.



/StarHealthBD

## INTERVIEW

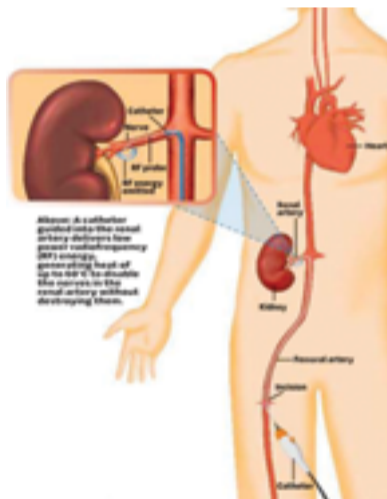
# Renal denervation to treat resistant hypertension

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Heart disease is something that has got much developed in Bangladesh for the last few years due to many reasons. At the same time, the discipline is getting much more developments in the other parts of the world. Recently Dr Rohit Khurana, a Senior Consultant of Cardiology at the Gleneagles Hospital, Singapore visited Bangladesh and exchanged his views with Star Health about some recent updates in the treatment of heart disease.

Dr Khurana is trained in general cardiology and subspecialising in coronary intervention who is routinely performing complex angioplasty. Dr Khurana has a joint academic position as Assistant Professor at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore.

Dr Khurana says that there are increasingly new treatments for heart diseases like renal denervation. It is a novel treatment that is used to treat people having resistant hypertension. Whereas hypertension is very common among the elderly population (about 40-50%), resistant hypertension affects about 5-10% of indi-



**Schematic diagram of renal denervation procedure by radiofrequency ablation.**

viduals.

Now hypertensive patients are treated by four to five types of medicine to treat the long term risk of heart disease. But to treat the patients having truly difficult hypertension to treat by several types of medicine, renal denervation may be a good solution. The aim is to ablate the nerves in walls of kidney artery. The abla-

tion helps in relaxation of the blood vessel and results in consistent improvement of blood pressure.

The response can sometimes be immediate and sometimes may be delayed. Also some 10% do not respond to the treatment.

Renal denervation has multitude of benefits — it reduces the established risk factors for heart disease and stroke by a significant degree also reduced the number of drugs to control hypertension.

The procedure is very much similar to that of coronary angiogram/angioplasty that means a catheter is inserted through the femoral artery (a blood vessel in thigh) and by radio frequency ablation catheter slowly burns the nerves in artery wall. It takes about one and half an hour. It can be performed as a day case basis, although patients are advised to stay overnight just for monitoring. The procedure costs on an average SGD 18,000 as a package.

Dr Khurana is involved in the teaching of medical students and mentoring final year theses in Singapore. He showed interest to train local physicians if he is asked for.

## HEALTH bulletin

BY CHOICE,  
NOT BY  
CHANCE

FAMILY PLANNING,  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
DEVELOPMENT

### Millions still lack access to modern contraception!

The number of women worldwide using modern contraceptive methods such as birth control pills is increasing, but an estimated 233 million women with partners may not have access to these methods in 2015, a new study published in The Lancet suggests. That means these women would have to rely on traditional contraceptive methods, such as not having sex or withdrawal of the penis before ejaculation.

### Colonoscopy cuts advanced cancer risk by 70 percent

Getting screening colonoscopies may reduce the risk of developing advanced colon cancer, according to a study published in Annals of Internal Medicine. In average-risk people, screening colonoscopies were associated with a 70% reduction in risk for new, late-stage colon cancer, including hard-to-detect cancers on the right side of the colon.

## Knowing for better living

### 5 easy ways may reduce risk of diabetes by about 80%

- Take healthy diet - low in fat, sugar and salt
- Take 20-minute exercise for at least 3 days per week
- Maintain a normal body weight
- Avoid smoking
- Avoid alcohol



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