

Too many Americans have high blood pressure, doctors warn

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(HealthDay)—A group of family physicians warns that too many

Americans struggle with high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart attack and heart failure, said Dr. John Meigs Jr., president of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

Since February is National Heart Month, now is a good time for people to get their blood pressure under control and treated so they can avoid heart disease, Meigs said.

A 2016 survey by the AAFP and data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 29 percent of Americans (75 million people) have high blood pressure, and only 54 percent have it under control.

"This finding is concerning because we know that high blood pressure and heart attacks or chronic heart failure are so closely related," Meigs said in an AAFP news release.

"According to the CDC, seven out of 10 people who have a first [heart attack](#) have high blood pressure. Seven out of 10 people who develop [chronic heart failure](#) have high blood pressure. So it's important that people know what their blood pressure is and work with their family physician to treat it," he said.

"Get your blood pressure checked. If you have [high blood pressure](#), work with your doctor to treat it and lower your risk factors," Meigs advised.

"That same advice applies to knowing what your [blood cholesterol levels](#) are," he added.

Meigs said you can work with your [family physician](#) "to prevent or reduce the risk factors that lead to heart disease. Learn about heart

health and what you can do in your everyday life to stay healthy."

More information: The American Heart Association has more on [high blood pressure](#).

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