

Only 30% of adults discuss pain relievers with doctors despite risk of raising blood pressure, finds poll

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Only about 30% of U.S. adults have spoken with their health care professional about the adverse effects some over-the-counter (OTC)

pain relievers can have on blood pressure, despite that fact that more than half of all adults in the country have elevated blood pressure, a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. The findings are part of a recent online poll commissioned by the American Heart Association, the leading voluntary health organization devoted to a world of longer, healthier lives for all.

Some [pain relievers](#) may raise [blood pressure](#), according to the American Heart Association's most recent Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Management of High Blood Pressure. It is important to consult with a health care professional—such a doctor, nurse or pharmacist—and make sure to read the label before taking any OTC medication for [pain](#), especially for those diagnosed with [high blood pressure](#).

"It's paramount that people who have high blood pressure, or are at risk for it, understand the effects associated with some over-the-counter pain relievers," said Mitchell S. V. Elkind, M.D., M.S., FAHA, chief clinical science officer of the American Heart Association and a tenured professor of neurology and epidemiology at Columbia University. "A conversation with a health care professional about pain relief options is essential to preventing and managing high blood pressure."

High blood pressure affects almost half of all people in the U.S. According to the American Heart Association's recent poll, of those who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, white and Asian adults (40%) are significantly less likely than Black (54.2%) and Hispanic (54.1%) adults to have ever discussed the effect some pain relievers have on blood pressure with a health care professional.

"Some over-the-counter pain relievers are safer than others," added Elkind. "A conversation with a health care professional regularly about medications you or a loved one takes is an important step in finding safe

options and controlling blood pressure."

The poll conducted by Big Village, a collaborative and consultative research firm, also looked at how often people used OTC pain relievers. Of close to 3,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older surveyed, nearly 50% took medication for pain once a week or more. Adults aged 45-54 take them most frequently of all [age groups](#) polled. Additional findings include:

- Gen X, people born from 1965 to 1980, are significantly more likely than other generations to take OTC pain relievers multiple times a day, but only 41% of Gen X would initially ask a health care professional for alternative pain relief even if they knew some OTC pain relievers can raise a person's blood pressure.
- Gen Z, people born from 1997 to 2012, are significantly less likely (30.5%) than any other generation to initially ask their health care professional for alternative pain relief if they knew some OTC pain relievers can raise a person's blood pressure.
- 61% of all respondents had not discussed the effect some over-the-counter pain relievers have on blood pressure with a health care professional.
- 22% would research an alternative pain reliever online, second only to discussing with a health care professional.

A proven way to manage high blood pressure, which is a consistent blood pressure measurement of 130 over 80 mm Hg or higher, is checking it regularly at home with a validated blood pressure device and working with your [health care](#) professional on a plan to control it.

Provided by American Heart Association

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