

Hypertension Facts

INTRODUCTION

Hypertension, also called high blood pressure, is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure and kidney disease. Data from the Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) were used to assess the burden of hypertension and hypertension control among Oregonians.

In Oregon, hypertension prevalence has been between 22% and 26% in the past 10 years. Prevalence numbers tell how common health behaviors or health conditions are in a population.

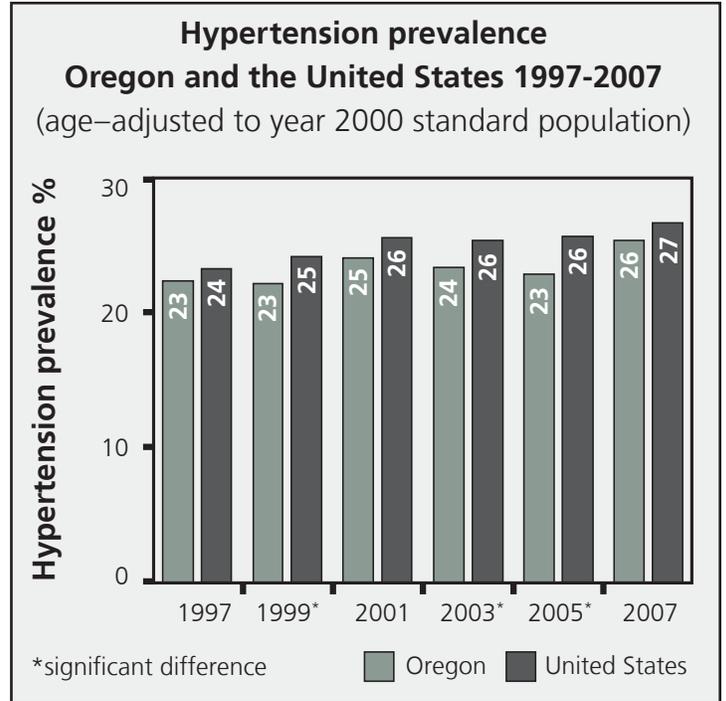
As age increases, the risk of developing hypertension increases substantially. In older Oregonians (age > 65 years), more than half of the population has hypertension.

Significant disparities exist in hypertension. African Americans have a higher prevalence of hypertension than all other racial groups with American Indians/Alaska Natives having the second highest prevalence.

Across the state, the highest prevalence occurs in Oregon's northeast, southwest and central coast counties, none of which include metropolitan areas.

Oregon BRFSS is a large, household-telephone, random-digit dialing health survey that tracks health conditions and risk behaviors among adults. For the purpose of this fact sheet, having hypertension is defined as answering "Yes" to this survey question: "Have you EVER been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you have high blood pressure?"

Two numbers are "significantly different" when a statistical test has been performed that indicates a low probability of the difference between them being zero.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Oregon Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program

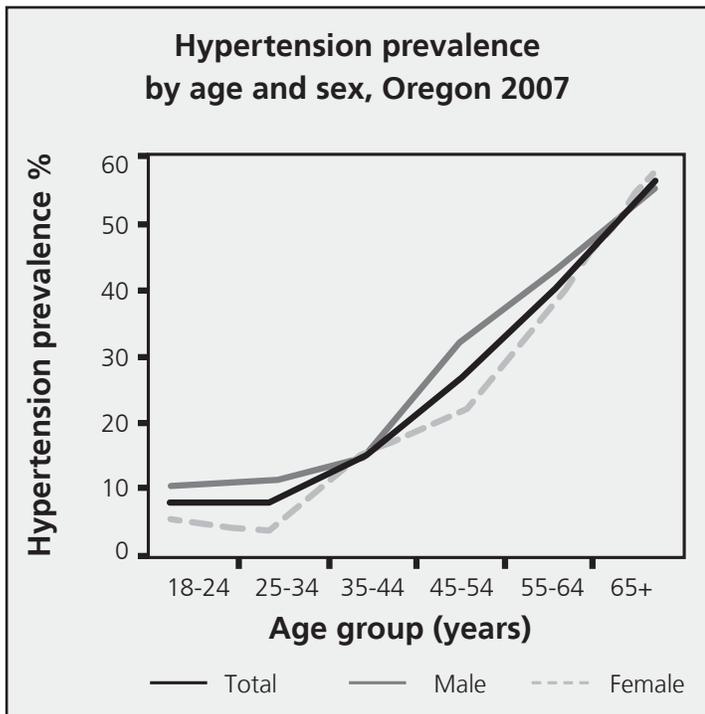
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In addition, Oregonians who have lower incomes and education also experience a greater burden of hypertension. Yet, among Oregonians who were told at least once by health professionals that they have hypertension, about 30 percent reported that their blood pressure was still at an unhealthy level at their last clinic visit and four out of five report being told on two or more different visits with a health professional that they had high blood pressure.

Healthy eating, regular physical activity and taking medication can help control blood pressure. The majority of Oregonians with hypertension have changed eating habits, cut down on salt intake, and are exercising and taking medication. However, there are still many people with hypertension who are not receiving the guidance they need from a health care provider and many who could benefit from lifestyle changes and medication.



NOTE: Blood pressure numbers include systolic and diastolic pressures. Systolic pressure is the pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood. Diastolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats. Normal blood pressure is a systolic blood pressure of less than 120 millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and a diastolic blood pressure of less than 80 mmHg. High blood pressure for adults is defined as a systolic blood pressure of 140 mmHg or higher, or a diastolic blood pressure of 90 mmHg or higher.

DISCLAIMER: This Hypertension Fact Sheet was produced by the Oregon Department of Human Services Public Health Division, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program with grant support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 5U50DP000726-03.

