

What's Your Number?

ARNG Launches Get Cuffed!® Blood Pressure Campaign

By LTC Jose Ortiz, M.D.
Courtesy of Decade of Health

Are you one of 30,000* National Guard Soldiers who have high blood pressure and don't know it? If you are, then you may be harboring a silent killer.

The Army National Guard is launching a Get Cuffed!® campaign to increase blood pressure awareness and target Army National Guard Soldiers with undiagnosed or uncontrolled high blood pressure. High blood pressure is a "silent killer," since you may have no symptoms until a heart attack or other significant medical event occurs.

Anyone can have high blood pressure and not know it, especially if you have a history of high blood pressure in your family. While high blood pressure is just one of several risk factors for heart attack or stroke, controlling high blood pressure is a critical start to minimizing your risk for premature death or illness.

KEY PARTS OF OUR GET CUFFED!® CAMPAIGN

- + Marketing and exposure to all Army National Guard Soldiers and families to increase educational awareness, measure blood pressure, and better identify and treat undiagnosed or uncontrolled high blood pressure.

- + Providing Blood Pressure Kiosks to all states and territories to make it easier for Soldiers and families to get their numbers checked.
- + Leveraging existing resources such as Hooah 4 Health and partnering with such organizations as the American Heart Association# to increase our available educational tools and outreach.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS AN ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIER?

1 Get your number. A normal blood pressure is below 120/80. High blood pressure is 140/90 and above. Any number between these blood pressures may be dangerous, depending on your other risk factors for heart disease or stroke (i.e., tobacco use, diabetes, age over 50, physical inactivity, personal or family history of high blood pressure/stroke/heart attack or high cholesterol). A high-salt diet, excess alcohol consumption, obesity, race and stress may also contribute significantly to high blood pressure. Even without any of these risk factors, routine blood pressure screening at least every two years is recommended by most medical experts for most healthy adults. More frequent checks may be necessary if you have one or more risk factors for heart disease or stroke. If you are unsure, consult with your health care provider.



2 Know your risk. Your risk depends on your number and your health-risk profile. Your risk increases with a higher blood pressure number and the more other risk factors present. Again, early diagnosis and treatment are keys to preserving your health and minimizing your risk.

3 Seek medical advice. If your number is high or even marginally high, consult a medical professional. While there are things that you can do immediately and on your own (stop smoking, improving your diet, exercise more), it's best to first consult with your health care provider prior to embarking on your own program. You may still need medication even after maximizing such preventive measures. While this may sound scary for some, the sooner that you can control high blood pressure, the sooner you may limit or even prevent damage to your heart and other vital organs.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A LEADER IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD?

1 Get engaged with your troops and take advantage of all teachable moments to promote better health, such as our Get Cuffed!© campaign.

2 Partner with your unit medical experts to help identify Soldiers with undiagnosed or under-treated high blood pressure.

3 Join the fight against this “silent killer” by helping to make blood pressure awareness a personal issue for your Soldiers, their families and in support of medical readiness.

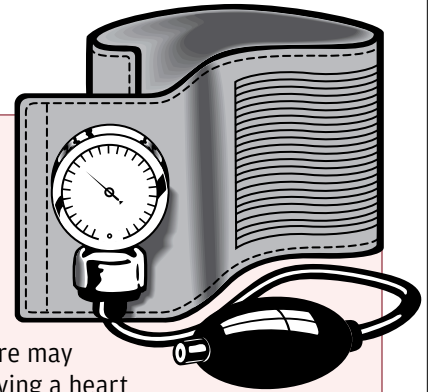
The Get Cuffed!© campaign is the second year of the Decade of Health for Army National Guard health promotion. The first year focused on Dental Readiness and succeeded in providing direct mail information on dental health to over 300,000 Soldiers and families, with a 45-percent increase in TRICARE Dental Reserve enrollment, over 3,900 new enrollments in 2006 and improvements to dental care for the reserve components.

We are partnering with the American Heart Association*, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs, Army Strength Maintenance, National Guard Bureau Family Program and *GX: The Guard Experience*, among others, to reach Army Guard Soldiers and families to make a difference. Let the Decade of Health team know about how we can help your state/territory, unit, individual Soldiers and families to maximize our campaign's success. The long-term goal is to improve overall wellness and quality of life in the Army National Guard. Help us to embark on this campaign by simply answering the question: What's your number? **GX**

About the author: LTC Jose Ortiz, M.D., MPH, is the Chief of Preventive Medicine, Office of the Chief Surgeon, NGB-ARS.

* Estimate based on national statistics noting that approximately 30 percent of the U.S. population has high blood pressure, and within that group, 30 percent of them are unaware of having high blood pressure.

A Memorandum of Agreement has been formally signed between the Army National Guard and the American Heart Association.



Key Facts

- + Early treatment of high blood pressure may prevent you from having a heart attack and stroke (two of the top three causes of death in the United States that kill over 50,000 Americans each year).
- + Untreated high blood pressure places undue strain on your heart, blood vessels, kidneys and eyes, frequently without any symptoms. You may even feel nothing up to the point of having a heart attack, stroke, heart or kidney failure, permanent damage to your eyes or even impotence.
- + Early identification and treatment of high blood pressure may increase your medical readiness as a National Guard Soldier by preventing a heart attack or stroke while also allowing you to meet deployment standards.

For more information, email:

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or visit:

www.DecadeofHealth.com



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