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PRESS RELEASE

MoHW Promotes Healthy Lifestyle on World Hypertension Day

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World Hypertension Day is observed annually on May 17 to raise awareness of hypertension and promote its prevention, detection, and control. This year's theme is "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer."

Hypertension or high blood pressure is one of the main risk factors leading to heart disease, which is one of the leading causes of mortality in Belize. The key risk factors contributing to hypertension include having a poor diet, eating foods high in salt, being overweight and limited physical activity.

The World Health Organization recommends that adults consume less than five grams (just under a teaspoon) of salt per day in order to reduce the risk of high blood pressure and its complications. Salt can be found in many different foods; however, excessive salt is seen in processed foods, such as bacon, chopped ham, salami, cheese, and instant noodles, among others.

The Ministry of Health & Wellness is currently prioritizing wellness campaigns and fairs throughout the country to promote health checks, healthy eating, and increased physical activity. Activities such as blood pressure testing, mental health services, weight and body mass index checks, and sharing healthy eating tips are key actions within these campaigns. The ministry encourages workplaces and schools to organize similar wellness activities.

The public is encouraged to practice the following nutrition and health tips.

- Measure your blood pressure often to know blood pressure levels.
- Take your blood pressure medication as prescribed.

- Use herbal-based seasonings such as garlic, onions, cilantro, spices, citrus juice, or salt-free seasonings instead of salt and bottle mixed seasonings.
- Avoid processed foods and canned foods.
- Consume fresh fruits and vegetables regularly.
- Maintain moderate physical activity (at least 30 minutes most days of the week).
- Manage and control stress levels.
- Reduce consumption of alcoholic and caffeinated drinks.

Follow these tips to prevent and control high blood pressure.

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