5 habits that raise blood pressure

LIFESTYLE FACTORS CAN FUEL THE RISE OF THIS ‘SILENT KILLER’, SAYS

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MANY of us have become obsessed with monitoring our daily step counts and sleep scores, but we rarely give a thought to our blood pressure, often referred to as a “silent killer” because it develops over many years without any warning.

“It’s important to keep an eye on your blood pressure because of the effects high blood pressure can have on the vascular system. Most importantly, on the risk of stroke, and secondly, on the risk of cardiovascular disease,” says Dr Martin Lowe, a consultant cardiologist and electrophysiologist at HCA Healthcare UK The Harley Street Clinic.

“If you have a family history of high blood pressure, you are more at risk,” he points out.

“Blood pressure also naturally increases with age, but some people have higher blood pressure than others even though they’re the same age. So, there are environmental factors.”

Here are five habits that could be raising your blood pressure...

“It’s hard to measure objectively, but stress meaning increased adrenaline release, and being in an environment which is constantly stressful, does put your blood pressure up.”

“Alcohol acts on the vasculature, acts on the heart, and that can lead to a rise in blood pressure,” says Dr Lowe

“If your sleep is disordered, so you’re a snorer, that will often be associated with a drop in oxygen levels at night. The way that the vasculature responds to that drop in oxygen saturation is by constricting, and that can lead to an increased blood pressure in the arteries”, says Dr Lowe.

As well as raising blood pressure, smoking speeds up the process of atherosclerosis, where fat clogs up your arteries, according to Blood Pressure UK’s website.

“For the cardiovascularly fit, although their blood pressure raises as a physiological response to exercise, we know their blood pressure is lower at times when they’re not exercising,” says Dr Lowe.

“Therefore, people who are more sedentary tend to be people who perhaps are heavier, make the wrong lifestyle choices, and blood pressure will be increased as a consequence.”