

Regular blood pressure checks essential urge pharmacists



3 out of 10 people required referral after national blood pressure day of action.

8 February 2024: Three in ten people who undertook a pharmacy-based blood pressure check this year required a referral for further investigations. The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) said that these findings highlight the urgent need for all adults, especially those aged *50 years and older to undertake regular blood pressure tests.

The results come following a National Blood Pressure Day of Action in Irish pharmacies on 18 January. In total 7,480 free blood pressure checks were performed in 680 participating Irish community pharmacies. While the majority participating only required general lifestyle and health advice 1,945 were referred to their GP for further testing. A further 299 people were given urgent referrals for high blood pressure highlighting the scale of the issue of undiagnosed high blood pressure.

Speaking on the findings and on the importance of getting regular checks of your blood pressure, IPU spokesperson and pharmacist Tom Murray said, “In just one day Irish pharmacies tested 7,480 people which revealed some stark statistics. 30% of those tested required a further referral, primarily to a GP.

“We were delighted to see such a strong uptake in those availing of the service. However, the findings highlight how serious the health issue of high blood pressure is in Ireland. All adults aged over 40 should have an annual blood pressure check, while under 40s should have a check at least every five years.”

If high blood pressure was to go untreated, it can lead to an individual developing several conditions including:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Dementia
- Problems with eyesight or kidneys

The IPU are also calling for proactive measures in tackling this serious issue and are advocating for a government funded case-finding blood pressure service, similar to that which is available to patients in the UK.[1]

Mr Murray concluded by advising people that, “There is a lot of information readily available in pharmacies and on the HSE website that gives clear and concise advice on how to keep your blood pressure levels down. The importance of knowing your blood pressure levels is key and taking the right course of action is critical.”

ENDS

For further information: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/high-blood-pressure-hypertension/>

* High blood pressure affects two out of three over 50s.

[1]

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