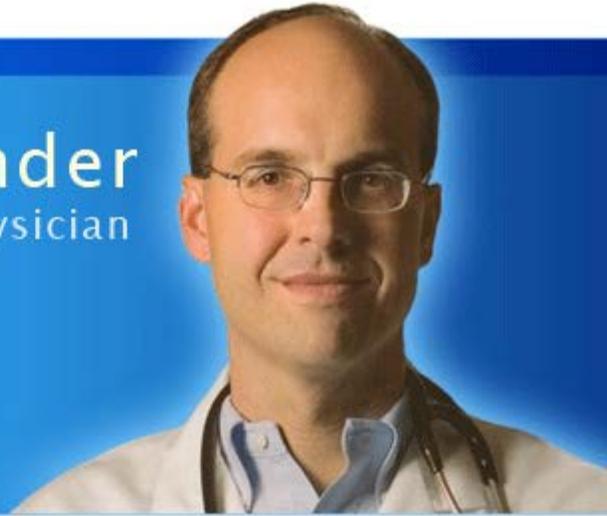


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## **SPRINT Trial Results (Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial)**

As many of you know, new treatment guidelines for blood pressure were released in late 2013. Interestingly these guidelines allowed for increases in the top number (systolic) in many groups age 60 and older. The decisions to do this were in large part based on a lack of medical studies documenting reduction in events (stroke, heart attack, death) from a lower number. Lower numbers also lead to more side effects from treatment particularly as the patient aged. The recommended blood pressure for treatment was 150/90 for those 60 and older and 140/90 for everyone else.

On November 26, 2015 the results of the SPRINT trial were released in The NewEngland Journal of Medicine. This landmark trial of 9500 patients age 50 and older set out to see if a lower systolic blood pressure of 120 was better than a higher one in regards to heart disease, stroke and death over a five year period. The study did not include people with diabetes. Surprisingly, the study was stopped two years early because of such a great benefit in the more intensive treatment arm.

The study was able to show that in people with a lower systolic pressure, there was a 43% reduction in death from cardiac causes, 38% less heart failure, and 27 % less reduction in death from any cause. These benefits were realized across all groups (men, women, race and age). The people in the more intensive treatment group needed an average of three medicines to control their blood pressure and were subject to more side effects (lightheadedness, fatigue). It is likely that had the study gone on for the full five years that the reductions seen would be even higher. Please be aware that diabetics were excluded as an earlier trial (ACCORD) failed to show a difference in aggressive treatment versus standard care.

So what does this mean for you? This landmark trial will redefine how aggressive we are in treating high blood pressure (the top number). Lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, reduced salt and alcohol) are still cornerstones but medicines will be necessary. I suggest obtaining a home blood pressure cuff (Omron was the brand used in this study) and begin to follow your pressure at home several times a week. Make an appointment to see me so we can begin the process of making sure you are where you need to be in terms of your treatment.