

## RESEARCH

# POOR WESTERN DIETS MAY NOT BE TO BLAME FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Poor Western diets and skipping the gym may not cause high blood pressure, if new research is to be believed.

An extremely active tribe in a remote region of India with no access to junk food also have the deadly condition.

The bizarre findings question the cause of the lifestyle disease, with many believing it to just affect the Western world due to their sugar and salt obsessions.

Members of the Katkari tribe, from Maharashtra, who consume a low-fat vegetarian diet, were followed over a

period of two years.

Their avoidance of meat, strongly linked to the condition in recent years, and their active lifestyle should have protected them.

Dr Klaus Witte, a consultant cardiologist at Leeds Teaching Hospital's NHS Trust, said the findings were 'unsurprising'.

He said: 'What this study confirms is that diabetes and hypertension result as an interaction between genes and lifestyle.'

'If you take away the risk factors (lifestyle) you do not eliminate the risk factors for



Eating junk may not be entirely to blame for heart diseases

cardiovascular disease. This is not surprising.

"Sensible lifestyle and appropriate medications can counter much of the adverse effect of genes on the risk of heart attack and stroke but of course not eliminate the risk of either totally.

"Lifestyle increases the risk of the conditions that contribute to cardiovascular disease for sure but combining this with a genetic predisposition is a toxic combination."

### WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension affects around

one in three adults, more than 17 million of the British population, figures show.

The deadly condition has been found to vastly increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and vascular dementia.

But because it has no symptoms until it is too late, only half of those with high blood pressure know they are at risk.

It is caused by being inactive, overweight, eating too much salt, drinking too much alcohol or it can run in families.

Online sources